The International
Crosby Circle Presents

No 69

BING

Edited by

REG
BRISTO

August

1983

" ing! - Bing started it all. Frank (Sinatra) and Perry Como will tell you. We all imitated Bing at first and then went on to develop our own styles. But Bing - The Man! - Bing started it all!"

DEAN MARTIN, feted in Britain in July last, said this on BBC TV "NATIONWIDE". True, he has said it before but in a forgetful,'50 pieces of silver world' it was good to hear it repeated in quite unsolicited fashion and illustrates that Dino is not among those likely to forget what Bing Crosby meant to the world of popular singing.

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BING

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Thro' an error too late to correct, the cover of this issue states August instead of September. This is unimportant provided you understand the NEXT issue is December, not November!

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The illustrations between pages 29-32 contain the outline of the Gonzaga statue. Many will be annoyed possibly at the omission again of the GEC radio programmes. Squeezed out, they will be resumed later. Our thanks to all contributors, named and un-named - all much appreciated.

There are good grounds for believing that a new and more acceptable book on Bing's career - the real substance - emanating from Canada, published in Ireland and marketed worldwide will be available, perhaps by Christmas.

Many members still bemoan the lack of a recording of Bing's great Noel Coward medley. There is a possibility that there may be news. If there is, it will be included with this issue !

There are some important dates to heed in this issue: Roy Chappell's, Leeds, and Newcastle's.....

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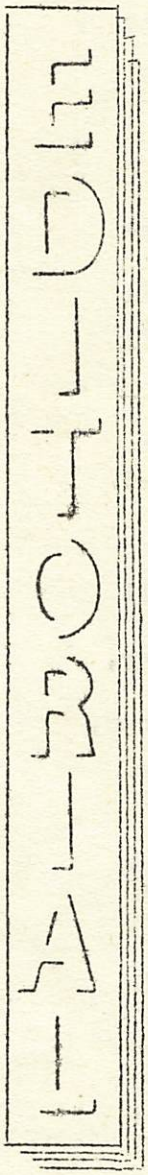


The Editorial on this occasion is quite literal - its about the Editor! Later on you will read of the Bing Crosby Friendship Club that was, it seems, flourishing certainly in 1938. Around the same time as we obtained this really nostalgic echo of 45 years ago we received a letter from our noted researcher COLIN PUGH, parts of which read as follows:

> "The magazine has been under your editorship for a long while now and it would be interesting to know which editor of all the UK magazines had the longest run. When yours goes into the lead (if it has not already done so) an indication of this in print would enhance prestige and possibly a regular caption to this effect would be in order."

Not having kept records ourselves, we turned to Michael Crampton of Leeds who, joining as a very young lad in 1950, must be among the longest-serving members! I do know Michael can reel off names that now we no longer hear; he has seen it go from the British Crosby Society to its present title - this occurred in 1966. You will see elsewhere, that while I was a Bing admirer from at least 1931, I never joined a society. From Michael's researches it appears that, perhaps aghast at what was happening to popular music, and learning that a Crosby society was in existence, I joined and soon began writing prolifically - - to the bewilderment of old members who not unnaturally regarded me as a "Johnny-come-lately!" Perhaps I released the pent-up thoughts from 1931 onwards! On account no doubt of this volume of writing, I became Assistant Editor around 1966. With the increasing demands of his job and a large family, my predecessor, Frank Murphy, asked me to take over the Editor/Secretaryship in September of 1971. However, while taking over the latter function, John Bassett edited the magazine until No. 38 in June 1975. I took over both functions from No. 39 in Sept. of 1975. Thus, I have been Secretary since 1971, and Editor too, since 1975. I must be exaggerating when I say I can't remember when I wasn't in these positions! I wonder what I used to do? Happily, the Johnny-come-lately aspects quickly disappeared and it was recognised that (mostly!) I know what I'm talking about in matters Crosby.

We had a dismal time in 1977 naturally when dear old Bing departed this world. I say we, but that did not include me. If Glenn Miller, Al Jolson, Rudolph Valentino not to mention Johan Sebastian Bach ca be revered and researched long after their decease, for certain that is the case with the entirely unique Bing Crosby.

So, this will answer quite a number of enquirers. Whether my sojourn has, or is, creating any longevity records, I cannot be sure. Perhaps there is no one left now who can tell the full story of Crosby clubs here in Britain. As for me - I certainly want to carry on for a long time. There is still so much to be said.....

IF YOU'RE IRISH - - - - - - - - -

come into the parlour ! Well, that's what the song says but we were going to say CHECK YOUR ANCESTRY! You may find out you are a relative of Bing Crosby! One man did just that as you can see overleaf. The story got a tremendous full-page spread in THE CORK EXAMINER of May 18th last and we have the direct and kind permission of the Editor of that paper to make use of this specially commissioned article.

Bing always appeared to be proud of his Irish connection. Not only in the way he sang Irish songs - on that score he could have been Hawaiian French, or even Mexican! But his rapporte with Barry Fitzgerald and the easy way he played the priest in his films, as well as the way he could slip into an authentic Irish brogue all helped to bear out that belief. And it was reliably reported that it was a highly emotional experience for Bing when he first set foot on Irish soil in Dublin, 1966. Visibly so.

Bing dealt with pride and affection, albeit briefly, in his book CALL ME LUCKY and appeared to be better versed on his grandfather's forbears than on his mother's, or grandmother's. For those who do not have his book as well as for those who haven't read it lately, here is what Bing wrote:

> "My father's family stemmed from a rock-ribbed, tough-minded Plymouth elder, Edmund Brewster, who settled in Massachusetts in the 1600's. His descendants lived in Massachusetts and other parts of New England for several generations. Most of them took to the sea, including my father's grandfather, Captain Nathaniel Crosby. Nathaniel captained a ship for John Jacob Astor. More than once he sailed around the Horn to California, Oregon, Washington and China. Finally, leaving Astor, he bought his own ship. In addition he entered into partnership with another man to buy and operate a ship-chandlery store. It was located in what is now the center of Portland, Oregon.
>
> Captain Nathaniel made frequent trips to China. Each trip kept him away for a year or two. Returning from one trip, he found that his partner had sold the store, the property on which it stood, and all the equipment and skipped. Captain Nathaniel could obtain no redress and had to start anew. Several years ago my brothers went to Portland to reopen the case and see if anything could be done about it. The property, in the heart of a big city, had achieved a fantastic value. But it was impossible to revive

THE CORK EXAMINER WEDNESDAY MAY 18th 1983

When Irish eyes are smiling . . .

THE great-grandparents of the late Bing Crosby were both born in the Mizen Penninsula in West Cork, and married there before emigrating to America in 1831, according to exhaustive research done by a professor of English at a Californian university.

The revelations have come as a complete surprise to the Crosby family, whose knowledge of its Irish roots has been vague, despite a family legend telling how ancestors had to hide in a cave in Ireland during the Rising of 1793.

The revelations have come as a bigger surprise to the researcher, Professor Joseph A. King, who began his work in a bid to trace his own ancestors.

Because they showed that Bing's great-grandfather was a brother of the professor's own great-grandmother and that both emigrated from the Toormore area, between Schull and Goleen.

Names like Harrigan, Horgan, O'Driscoll, Sauntry, Lucey, Goggin, O'Brien, Regan, Kingston, Sullivan, Donovan and Jardine abound throughout the professor's research.

It has been a long exhaustive work by Professor King, done with the invaluable assistance of the parish records in both Schull and Goleen.

Today, the *Examiner* publishes a specially-commissioned article in which the professor tells the story of his research and his findings.

Bing's family tree

JOHN ("ORGAN O'BRIEN") HARRIGAN
of Parish of Schull, Co. Cork

Ellen†
1778-1891
m. Timothy Lucey
emig. 1851
to Littleton, Me.
d. Oshkosh, Wi.

Ann
c. 1780-1880
m. William Fitzgerald
emig. 1830
to Miramichi, N.B.
d. Oshkosh, Wi.

Dennis Horgan/Harrigan
b. 1780 Co. Cork, d. 1864 Miramichi, N.B.
m. Catherine Driscoll
emigrated July 1831 to Miramichi, N.B.
10 ch. — all but Dennis Jr. born in Co. Cork

Cornelius
d. c. 1851
m. Eliz. Sloan
emig. abt. 1830
to New Brunswick
d. Miramichi, N.B.

John
1800 —
m. Ellen Murphy
emig. 1830
to Miramichi, N.B.

William
f 1838
Williamstown, N.B.

Ellen*
1809-'97
m. Wm. Sauntry
Goleen, Co. Cork,
lived at Dromkeal,
near Ballydehob
emigrated 1851

Ann†
1811-1857
m. Patrick Keyes

Catherine†
1816-'93
m. Wm. Walsh

Cornelius
1823-f1895
unmarried

Jeremiah
1823-1903
m. Margt. Murray

b. Williamstown,
6 Miramichi, N.B.

Dennis, Jr.
1832-1915
m. Cath. Ahearn
7 children
moved to
Stillwater, Minn.
in 1867

John†
1813-f1871
unmarried

Michael
1820-'82
m. Eliz. Walsh

William
1825-'77
m. Jane Gallagher

Patrick
1830-c1924
m. Cath. Hogan

William
1867-1949
m. Annie T. —

Ambrose/Alexander
1869- f 1915

Edward
1870-1926
m. Dolly Levings

Catherine
1873-1964
m. Harry Lowe Crosby
7 children

Francis Albert
1876 - f 1915

Annie
1875 - f 1964
m. Ed. Walsh

George L.
1879 - c 1955
m. Hannah Anderson

THE CROSBYS

Lawrence
1895-1975

Everett
1896-1966

Edward (Ted)
1900-'73

Harry Lillis ("Bing")
1903-'77
7 children

M/1: Wilma W. Wyatt (Dixie Lee)
Ch.: Gary, Dennis and Phil (twins), Lindsay.
M/2: Olive Grandstaff (Kathryn)
Ch.: Harry Lillis, Mary Francis, Nathaniel

Geo. Robert (Bob)
1913 -
m. June Kuhn

Catherine
1904 - dec.
m. Ed. Mullin

Mary Rose
1906 -
m. Jim Pool

Cont. from page 5

the case.

I have a picture of Captain Nathaniel's ship, 'The Kingfisher', taken from a painting done by an intinerant artist many years ago. Because of his many trips to China Nathaniel had Chinese servants, as did his son - my father's father. Having been raised by Chinese servants, my father spoke fluent Chinese and could even sing a few Chinese songs. I remember him singing them as he twanged his mandolin.

My mother's parents, Dennis and Katherine Harrigan, came from Ireland. When they were very young they settled in Ontario, Canada. They moved to Stillwater, Minnesota, where my mother was born. When she was still a young girl they headed west and settled in Tacoma, where my Grandfather Harrigan became a building contractor.

HE RAISED A LARGE FAMILY, INCLUDING MY MOTHER, HER SISTER ANNIE, AND FIVE SONS: GEORGE, FRANK, WILL, AMBROSE, AND ED. MOTHER'S BROTHER, GEORGE HARRIGAN WAS MY BOYHOOD IDOL. SHE HAD FIVE BROTHERS BUT UNCLE GEORGE WAS THE STAND-OUT. HE WAS A VERY TALENTED ENTERTAINER. As an Exalted Ruler of the Elks in Tacoma, he took part in theatricals around Seattle and in the Tacoma area. He picked up the song 'Harrigan, That's Me' and audiences all over the state of Washington insisted that he sing it wherever he appeared. He had a powerful Irish-tenor voice. It wasn't a lyric tenor like John McCormack's or Dennis Day's, but a powerful Irish tenor. Uncle George could shatter the crockery when he took dead aim at a high note. He was a genius when it came to telling dialect stories. He could do French-Canadian stories, he'd picked up a store of Swedish stories from the loggers around Puget Sound, and he was wonderful at an Italian dialect. At Irish-dialect stories he was nothing short of magical.

When he came to town the Crosby kids never left the house; we hung around and listened to Uncle George tell stories and sing songs. If he'd gone into show business he'd have been a hit. He was a handsome man with a shock of black hair, freckles, blue eyes and a colourful Irish personality. But he was a court reporter, he had a large family to support, and although he worked hard, he could never get enough cash together to have a fling at breaking into show business.

Uncle George kept my father company, diverted him with his best stories, and raised a comforting glass with him when I was born on May 2, 1904, in Tacoma, Washington. I've seen several dates listed for my birth in various publications, among them 1901, 1903, and 1906. I'd like to take 1906 but 1904 is the one I was stuck with."

THUS BING IN HIS OWN STORY "CALL ME LUCKY". Sure enough, in the family tree on the preceding page, one can see all the seven

Cpnt -------

children of DENNIS HARRIGAN, including Bing's mother Catherine, are shewn in the line above the bottom line. It is interesting to note that Uncle George (to Bing) lived to the age of 76 and died in 1955 - comparatively recently!

It is also evident that while there were at least two of Bing's elder family, i.e. his own father and Uncle George, were extrovert, musical, characters of personality who never did get into show business. So Bing had no history of show-business antecedents.

Bing's mother, Catherine was born in 1873 (and died 1964) and thus was two years older than the only other daughter among the five sons - and no doubt why she was named Catherine after Bing's grandmother.

It will be seen, also, that it was Bing's sister Catherine (deceased) was the Crosby child born in 1904; in CALL ME LUCKY Bing was quite honest about the doubts of his birth-date and frankly admitted his 'vanity' in choosing 1904, though he would have preferred 1906!

The bottom line on the preceding page shows, of course, the children of Catherine and Harry Lowe Crosby. Only Bob and Mary Rose survive.

A surprise for this writer was to discover that Lawrence (Larry) was the eldest of the family. We had always believed that Everett held that position. Larry died at 80, Everett at 70, Edward (Ted) at 73, Bing of course at 74. Bob is now 72 while Mary Rose (Pool) is 78. Bing's mother was 81 on her decease in 1964. The 'tree' doesn't show when Bing's father died, and we can't recall. But it is clear that on the whole, the Crosbys were a long-living family.

We have mentally noted before, looking at the map, that Bing was very close to being a Canadian! This is also confirmed by the fact that his mother was born in Ontario and moved into the United States when a young girl.

Having made the above reflections we can return to the story in THE CORK EXAMINER, started on the previous pages entitled WHEN IRISH EYES ARE SMILING; before doing so, however, we might remark that the story we reproduce is abridged as not all of it is too relevant to Bing. From what the author says, he must have discovered his distant relationship to Bing after Bing died as you will see he talks about corresponding with Bing's relatives. With his known Irish interest, perhaps its a little surprising that Bing never commissioned anyone to trace his Irish ancestry. Be that as it may, here are parts of the story written by PROFESSOR JOSEPH A KING :

I've been told I belong to a disappearing breed - "pure" Irish Amecicans of the third generation. None of my grandparents knew Ireland but all of their parents were born there.

Raised in Brooklyn, New York, where I attended a Catholic school with a large "Irish" contingent in the 1930's, I learned to think of myself as American, Catholic, and Irish, probably in that order.....

One of my grandparents, a Tyrrel, knew her father's exact birthplace - Knockduff, Bree, Co. Wexford. The others knew only the counties - Cork (Fitzgerald), Lenehan,

Callaghan, May (King, Lawless) and Laois (Cassin). To find the townlands and parishes was to become, long after my grandparents were gone, a pleasurable and largely successful research project of mine, full of surprises.

> One such surprise was to learn I was a distant cousin of the late crooner Bing Crosby. The records I turned up indicated his great-grandfather Dennis Harrigan and my great-great-grandmother Ann Fitzgerald were brother and sister, both from the Mizen Peninsula of County Cork, but that is getting ahead of my story.

THE DISCOVERY OF THIS BLOOD TIE TO BING LED ME TO BELIEVE THAT I COULD FIND MY OWN ROOTS IF I TRACED BING'S BACK FAR ENOUGH. THE HITCH WAS THAT BING'S RELATIVES - I WAS NOW CORRESPONDING WITH SOME OF THEM - WERE AS MUCH IN THE DARK AS I. SO I HAD TO GO BACKWARDS, GATHERING LITTLE BITS OF DATA, FROM THE US TO NEW BRUNSWICK, AND FINALLY TO IRELAND.

Bing's mother, I learned, was Catherine Harrigan, born in 1873 in Stillwater, Minnesota, a logging and sawmill town on the St. Croix river. She was baptised by the priest of St. Michael's Catholic Church there.

Bing's maternal grandparents were Dennis Harrigan Jr., a carpenter and Catherine Ahearn, both born in Miramichi (Northumberland Co.) New Brunswick - in 1832 and 1836 respectively.

Bing's great grandparents were Dennis Harrigan (Sen) and Catherine Driscoll who, according to the 1851 census arrived in the Colony of New Brunswick from Ireland in 1831. They brought with them eight children. Their youngest child, Dennis Jnr. was born the year after their arrival. Their oldest, a married daughter (Ellen Sauntry) remained in Ireland, but she would arrive as a widow with her own family twenty years later. Dennis's sister, Ann Harrigan Fitzgerald, her husband William, and their eight children would arrive in 1830 and 1831 (one of their children was my great grandfather, Maurice Fitzgerald). A brother, Cornelius arrived about 1830 and a sister, Ellen Harrigan Lucey, would arrive in 1851.

Other relatives and friends from the Old Country came over - O'Briens, Gagginses, Regans, Kingstons, Sullivans, Donovans, Jardines - and many of them settled with the Harrigans in the remote community of Williamstown, in the old Parish of North Esk on the Miramichi.....

A bit of apocrypha passed down to Bing, supposedly from a Harrigan granduncle, was not too helpful: "The first Harrigan was John of Skibbereen, known as 'Organ' O'Brien because he played that instrument so beautifully in Skibbereen Church. He changed his name to Harrigan."

Another story was told by Bing's great grand-aunt Ellen Harrigan Lucey to a reporter for an Oshkosh, Wisconsin newspaper shortly before she died in 1891 at the incredible age, so it was reported, of 112:

Cont.....

"MY FAMILY (THE HARRIGANS) HAD TO HIDE IN A CAVE DURING THE RISING OF 1798" she recalled. She claimed she was born in 1778 and that she had the last of her ten children, John Lucey, in 1833 when she was 55 years old. (Her child-bearing years were indeed from 1810 to 1833 according to the testimony of the Irish baptismal registers which I would one day locate).

The best clue came from the long memory of a very old man in Williamstown, New Brunswick, who remembered from his childhood one Mick Sauntry who, before he passed away in 1914 at the age of 94, used to talk of his youth in "Bally-dee-hall', ten miles west of Skibereen". Because I happened to know that Mick Sautrey's mother was Ellen Harrigan (a first cousin once-removed to Bing Crosby), I eagerly checked my map of Ireland and, lo, there was the village of Ballydehob, ten miles west of Skibereen."

The rest of Professor King's story concerns the painstaking and long-drawn-out research he carried on, with the help of many "Corkonians", some of them well-versed in folklore and does not concern itself particularly with Bing, except that the names O'Brien, Harrigan and others mentioned constantly recurred thro' the generations.

Possibly off-beat Crosbyana but we feel it will be of interest. It seems pretty certain that Bing never learned of these researches which would no doubt have fascinated him and concreted his Irish "connection". Odd that the name Catherine recurs so often - his mother and his sister bore the name - and, coincidentally, he came to marry a KATHRYN.....seems Bing's grandparents landed in Ireland precisely a century before Bing made his worldwide impact, e.g. in 1831. It is clear, too, from whence both Nathaniel and Dennis got their names!

'Tis said its dangerous, or at least, it can be uncomfortable (Its certainly expensive!) to trace back thro' one's ancestry. You may easily find one of your forbears was hanged for being a highwayman! Or was similarly punished for steeling a sheep - or 2/6d! On the other hand, you MAY find out you are the rightful heir to an earldom, or that another of them shot arrows into the air at Hastings! Perhaps its better to let sleeping ancestors lie, after all.

However, we do have many members in Ireland - even in Cork itself - and it should prove of consuming interest to them. Its likely, too, that if Bing had known what is revealed in the above article, Cork might have seen a lot more of him !

STRAYED FROM "TRADING POST"!! MR. GEOFF. NICHOLSON, 57 Tivoli Crescent, Brighton, Sussex, BN1 5NB (phone 0273 - 556210) invites offers for a large selection (in excellent condition) Bing LPS: BING IN HOLLYWOOD 1930-34 (double CBS); BING CROSBY STORY VOL I CBS66210; Wrap your troubles in Dreams (RCA Victor LSA 3094; YOUNG BING CROSBY RCA RD27075, CROSBY CLASSICS (Realm RM52069; Rare Early Recordings (Biograph BLPC13); Where the Blue of the Night (Biograph B,PM 1) Bing, the Early 30's Vols 1 and II (Ace of Hearts) Bing Crosby Collection CBS Vols 1, II,III, OLD MASTERS Vols 1 & II (Ace of Hearts); Among my Souvenirs /Rare Style (both Ace of Hearts); Join Bing & Singalong(Warner WM4021), and many, many others.

"THE BING CROSBY FRIENDSHIP CLUB"

45 YEARS ON —

1938 — — 1983

Two issues back we reproduced a PICTUREGOER advertisement by Ted Mole for the above club. It produced an interesting sequel; Vince Waring, of Alker St., Wigan not only remembered the club but was a member. More than that, Vince has kindly photo-stat'd a copy of the magazine of that club, an issue of 1938. Another member, G. R. (Tom) Evans, of of Brereton Rd., New Invention, Willenhall, Staffs was also a member of that club long ago - and he is most grateful to Vince for letting him too have a copy of this old magazine for the wonderful memories it brings back.

Now, does anyone know these addresses? Better still, does anyone know the PEOPLE? -

Ronald Clark, 8 Croydon Rd., Penge, London, SE20
Edna Wilton, 'New Reign', 583a Corporation Dr., Elm Park Hornchurch, Essex.
Betty Hill, 19 Villiers St., Listerhills, Bradford.
Dorothy Masters, 10 Batavia Rd., New Cross, London, SE.
Daisy Guy, Post Office, Milcombe, Banbury, Oxon
Helen Conway, "Glenhead" Portswood Ave., Southampton.
Leslie Smith, 44 St. Margarets Rd., Tottenham, London N17
Miss G. White, 25 Skelton Rd., Forest Gate, London E7
Gladys Mackie, 21 Stevens Rd., Dagenham, Essex.
Audrey Luck, 4 Stanstead Villas, Commonside, Nr. Emworth, Hants.
Edna Brooks, 16 Broadway St. Burton-on-Trent, Staffs.
Fred Jillings, 1 Goring Gardens, Dagenham, Essex.
Marjorie Smith, 87 Brunswick Ave., Beverley Rd., Hull
Len Homersham, 30 Claremont St. North Woolwich, London
Ray Forster, 116 Waldgrave Rd Liverpool 15
(Can this be our current Ray - still in Liverpool!)
Miss D. Mallows, 10 Oak Cottages, George Green, Nr. Slough
Joan Partridge, 114 Woodlands Ave. New Malden, Surrey
Alfred Evers, 2 Bath Buildings, Montpelier, Bristol
Joyce and Joan Carter, 56 Bush Rd., Hillside, Av. Buckhurst Hills, Essex.
Molly Green, 127 Two Ball Lonne Newcastle...

These are just a selection of those listed 45 years ago as being new members of the Friendship Club! TED MOLE, the organiser, lived at 47 Craven Gardens, Barkingside, Essex. The holocaust of the Second World War has intervened, apart from the long passage of all those years, but doesn't it evoke strange feelings to think of all those people enlisting in A Bing Club, just as they do the Circle today? One feels they must now - if they are still living—be in their 60's at least.

Their magazine, CROSBY COMMENT, was printed in much the same style and size as BING . The particular issue sent, that of May, 1938, carried a long review of the film DR. RHYTHM....

(Cont..

"Now showing at the Plaza Cinema, Regent St. London" as the review proclaimed; there was a page-story by TED MOBE himself, a kind of Editorial in which he said his troubles had cleared (caused by eye strain) and that he was now able to carry on as before....

HELEN CONWAY wrote a review of BING ON THE AIR "3am March 4, 1938"; Bob Burns was one of the guests and Mischa Auer and Maureen O'Sullivan; Bing started off the proceedings singing THE GYPSY IN MY SOUL; then "Bing sang a lovely number, ON THE SENTIMENTAL SIDE" wrote Helen. ! Maureen O'Sullivan (a famous film star of the time to younger members!) was invited to sing - Maureen said she would but it was a bit silly to "compete with you, Bing!" Bing said that was sweet of her and they both sang IF YOU'RE IRISH!

There was also an announcement about a proposed sports section - sailing, hiking or cycling! Athletic lot then! Londoners only!

There was a "fashion corner" - and a "radio personalities" feature - nothing at all to do with Bing....there was a Poet's Corner...ah me, dare I quote?:

*Bing Crosby is a marvellous man,
Croons like no-one else can.
Loves his wife and babies too,
Without our Bing what would we do? "

Yes, I agree....but altogether, it was a brave effort. And, yes, there was an article CINEMA ORGAN ON PARADE: No. 3 - Reginald Porter-Brown, organist of the Forum Cinema, Southampton. They didn't mind diversifying in those days.

There was one story that appealed to me:

CROONER TROUBLE:

Claudette Colbert was playing some of her favourite Bing Crosby records in her dressing-room the other day, when her telephone rang. The star herself answered. An irate voice yelled: "Listen, if you must make all that noise, which disturbs me in my dressing -room, for heaven's sake play something better than those Crosby records. That guy's horrible crooning gives me a pain!"

"I don't know who you are, " reacted Claudette angrily, "but you can't make cracks to me about my friend Bing and his singing! If you had any musical sense you'd know that he has a fine voice and does NOT croon."

She then heard smothered laughter and Bing's voice saying: "Attagirl, Claudette, 'scuse me for riling you but when I heard you playing my records, the temptation to pull a gag was too good to pass up!"

There was a gramophone record note, quoted from THE PEOPLE by a Cecil Hadley:

"I am not exaggerating when I say you can buy any Bing Crosby record with safety because Bing never lets anything go by slip-shod. A newly-cut disc by the greatest favourite in the world is THE MOON GOT IN MY EYES and SMARTY (Brunswick 02498). I have played it half a dozen times already its so good."

Gives one an eerie feeling, reading this magazine of 1938.....

It is interesting that this 1938 magazine carried a review of a topical Bing radio programme; the lady was obviously one of that select band which owned powerful 'wireless' sets capable of picking up short-wave broadcasts. We have some in our current membership who used to do just that, too! I'm afraid our household never aspired to such a set - and if it had, I'm sure we would have spent so long finding the station amidst all the howls and wheezes that the programme would have been over. I believe, if memory serves me right, that WIRELESS WORLD was a big help, however, giving the times of programmes from abroad, including America, and where they could be found on the dial.

We said earlier the mag was the approximate size of BING; this related to the size of the pages. Actually, it consisted of just 12 pages, and we saw no mention of annual subscription rates.

> Reverting to getting Bing's broadcasts 'live', as it were, above it is needless to say that tape recorders of any kind lay in the future - and at the time (1938) seemed an impossible dream.

1938 - the year of Munich, when it was becoming increasingly plain that Europe was heading for another catastrophe. Vieing, no doubt, with Bing's broadcasts were the rantings and ravings of Hitler, easily picked up here. They were in German of course but the menace was clear. And we all knew, despite Chamberlain's buoyant return to London with "a piece of paper" - an 'agreement'(!) with Hitler - that we were all moving inexorably to the showdown. It was the year that gas-masks were issued to one and all, as were the Anderson air-raid shelters. How one recalls the gloomy resignation with which we undertook these tasks.....so much worse was to follow.

> But Bing sang on....he was about to make SING YOU SINNERS; and to play quite a role in the conflagration which duly arrived on 3rd September a year later.....

However, no history lessons, or morbid introspection, is required here! We are indeed grateful to Vince Waring for this glimpse of our predecessors.

I must confess that while there was probably no more avid Bing admirer than I in existence I was totally unaware there was a BING CROSBY FRIENDSHIP CLUB! No doubt there were others, too. My impression is that such was Bing's popularity at that time that the whole world seemed a Crosby fan club.

Member DENNIS SAVILLE, of Thamesmead, London, told us of the broadcast Max Bygraves did, standing in for Jimmy Young, who was on "Budget Day" duty. Max asked each of three guests to choose ONE record for 'that' island.... Eric Sykes recalled a time in the Far East during the War, when with everyone in confusion and trying to dodge Japanese shells, he heard from somewhere nearby "the sweet sound" of Bing Crosby singing SILENT NIGHT.

And that is one record he could listen to for the rest of his life....

As Dennis said: A fine tribute - but just one of literally millions. It seemed that wherever men were called upon to fight, somehow they managed to take 78s with them - and there was always Bing. Unique, which the dictionary defines as having no equal. That is certainly Bing.

EMPTY SADDLES

----in the East End of London,not the Old Corral.....

BY:
DON E. WOOD (Fetcham, Surrey).

Editor's note: Receiving this story out of the blue, I was puzzled as to whether it was truth or fiction ? Enquiry of Don brought the reply: 95 per cent true, just a tiny bit of embroidery.....I take his word for it!

The old man lay back on the pillows, his wasting body racked by choking coughs. He had a brown, walnut, face with the sad, sagging, eyes of an elderly spaniel. An unlighted hand-rolled cigarette protruded from the side of his mouth - like a brown twig, a defiant gesture to belie the obvious breathing problems.One could almost visualise a sign at the bottom of the bed declaiming 'Nicotine Rules - OK?'; But there was only the usual chart and the name - F. Croucher.

The coughing subsided as I approached the bed. "How are you today, Mr. Croucher?" The standard question of the hospital visitor, but how does a man with virtually no lungs left answer it? The watery eyes looked a little furtive: "Not good, mate, not good. Reckon I've just about had it."

He sank back on the pillows again. I explained I was a hospital visitor, trying to help out with the nursing staff so busy all the time. "If there is anything I can do for you, do let me know...do you read much, or listen to music?"

"Nah, never read a book ih my life," his voice came as if filtered thro' sandpaper. I did read SPORTING LIFE tho, since I was a nipper. But books? Nah...." It sounded as if reading books was tantamount to mental decay. "Music then?" I pressed on. "Any favourite music?" "Not that rubbish on there" - he indicated the headphones hanging over the bed-rail. "But there used to be music...don't suppose you'd know it but there was a lovely record - EMPTY SADDLES. That was our favourite, my missis and me loved that. Alice was very musical -- Bing Crosby was the only singer for her. Good ol' Bing... she nearly wore that ruddy record out, playing it all the time..."

The next day I brought Fred - we were on first names now - a cassette of Crosby recordings with my portable player plus a lightweight headset. I made the opening track EMPTY SADDLES - and he was enthralled. He obviously didn't understand how his well-worn 78 had been transferred onto a piece of plastic ribbon - or whatever; but he grasped the mechanics of the player and I was happy to leave it with him.

I wasn't able to attend again for a couple of days. When I did, I was greatly saddened to see two nurses re-making up Fred's bed. Fred had died in the early hours, they told me - but would I go to the Almoner's office where, I learned, his daughter was waiting to see me.

She turned out to be a neat, gentle, little woman of around 50. Her husband, about six-feet three in blue

duffle-coat, towered behind her, twisting his cap. She smiled as we met: "Mr. Wood? They told me there was a chance you would call today so I waited. I want to thank you for all you did for Dad"- her smile went -"he died last night."

"Yes," I said, "I've just been to the ward - it was little enough. I'm very sorry; I hadn't known him all that long."

"Well, I did want to thank you for the machine and all, he did enjoy those last few days, thanks to you"

She dabbed at her eyes, and I found myself wishing this big husband of hers would wrap her up darefully in his duffle-coat and take her home for her private grief. But, she seemed to pull herslf together. "You know Dad told us all about your kindness, Bing singing EMPTY SADDLES....but he never had time to tell you the full story..."

She, however, did - and it was impossible, of course, for me to have had the slightest inkling. Her story took me to a little two-up, two-down semi-detached in Stepney in February of 1941. It was nine-thirty at night and no air-raid of the kind they had been getting. But they learned afterwards that a lone German bomber, in trouble, was making all speed for the North Sea. And while passing over Stepney had jettisoned its one remaining bomb. That's all; jettisoned it with no particular aim or target.

At 28 George St. Stepney, Alice was in the kitchen making a cup of tea - their usual practice, while George in the little sitting room wound up the gramophone and called out: "I suppose you want the usual Alice? Ol' Bing and EMPTY SADDLES!"

Clearly the bomb was on its way. The daughter shivered, even at this late date. "They got Dad our almost rightaway - shocked but unhurt. Mum - Alice - was never found. Not a piece of clothing, even. That was terrible, wasn't it" she appealed to me, so sadly. Then with a handshake, she again thanked me and walked out....her husband took my hand in a grip that felt it was fracturing a couple of fingers.

"She really is grateful," he said. "I've heard that story a few times, I can tell you - we were courting at the time, at long distance though for I was in the Navy. And its just the way she told it. That's how the old woman got killed - a desperate, lone bomber.....

"In time, when the hurt had gone, the old chap used to laugh a little and swear that as they pulled him out, that gramophone was still playing! He used to chuckle and say they did some terrible things - but they couldn't stop Bing singing! Became a family joke, you know."

With a final handshake, he too went. I looked at the cassette - it had of course been handed back to me with the player.

When I got home I slipped the cassette in the player and pressed the play-button.

"Empty saddles in the old corral,
Where d'you ride tonight...?"

Yes, it was all set to play the song again and I thought back to the remarkable story I had stumbled across.

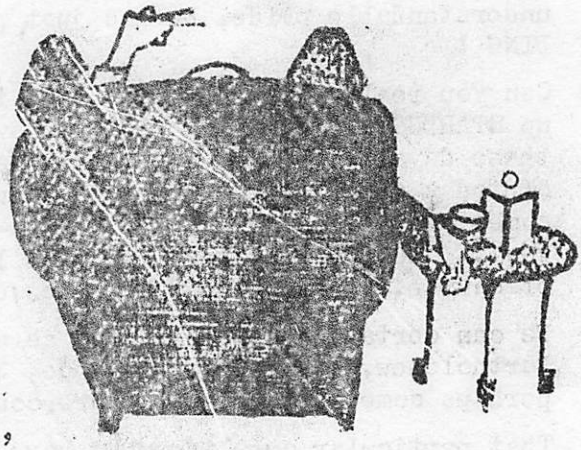
"Are you rounding up the dogies,
The strays of....

I almost heard the shattering crash which left a man who would never be quite the same again without his Alice "who was very musical - and loved ol' Bing Crosby..."

And I thought a lot of the odd circumstance through which I "found" him....

Editor: True or not - and it certainly could be - I like it! I hope you do, too.

BING track EVENTS



Summer is, traditionally, considered a "close season" for record issues.

There are so many counter-attractions demanding cash. Add to summer a "recession" summer; add to that a lovely, hot, summer and it adds up to a "close season" indeed. It follows, therefore, you will not be finding it necessary to dig into your savings to keep up with the records output. Not a happy situation but, in view of the circumstances outlined, to be expected.

Something somewhere is bound to be happening; something being planned to delight us later in the year.

Meanwhile, there are one or two oddments around, records we have dealt with before. WE'LL MEET AGAIN is a case in point; a collection of War-time favourites including three Crosby tracks, viz:

WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT MOONLIGHT BECOMES YOU
SWINGING ON A STAR. K-TEL NE1188

It has turned up in Woolworths at £1.99p, originally being £4.99. Nothing, of course, to get excited about over three tracks that have been constantly reissued. Attractive no doubt if the rest of the tracks appeal to you - by various prominent wartime artists.

The BBC have made an issue entitled SATURDAY SIDE OF DAVID JACOBS REH 475 with a price of £4.99p. There is one Bing track, SO RARE, one of the Buddy Cole/Pete Martin mixes taken from the Philips double-set SONGS OF A LIFETIME. Again, hardly an attraction.

No doubt we sound disparaging! Not really; its just that these tracks - on both albums mentioned - are hardly rare and in any case are in most collections. It does seem that Woolworths - principally - in these extremely odd "economic" times are buying up deleted warehouse stocks very, very cheaply. Many members have had the experience of being able to buy SEASONS and that sparkling album, THAT TRAVELLIN' TWO-BEAT for £1.49p - THE TWO! Which is a remarkable bargain by any standards. What is contemporarily termed "cash-flow" i.e. money in the bank instead of borrowing at high interest rates, is responsible for these real bargains. I mean, who could ignore spares at those prices? We certainly recommend members to keep an eye on Woolworths (and some other shops) for we are frequently getting letters saying, in effect, "I picked up the JAZZIN' BING CROSBY - for 75p!" Or some other album. These are indeed odd times.

Odd times! That can certainly be said again - and again. We had a letter from one of our very youthful members recently. A keen young fella, barely into his teens. And he told us, with understandable pride, he had just picked up HIS FIRST 78rpm OF BING !

Can you really imagine that? And it was a good one he picked up STARDUST/I CRIED FOR YOU (Brunswick 02805) bejabbers.....in these days of albums, double albums and big sets, the young 'uns of today cannot be expected to know what those days were like... sometimes having to SAVE UP half-a-crown (12½p) to buy a Bing 78.... But, its a start for that lad! to add to his albums, of course. And now no doubt the search is on for more.

We can certainly describe that as a TRACK EVENT for young Cliff Bartholomew, 245 Yorkland Avenue, Welling, Kent, DA16 2LH - perhaps some members with spares could really make him sit up!

That particular coupling must have been issued around 1939/40 - one title was recorded in '38 and STARDUST in 1939 (the second recording of that). One cannot help wondering what the particular 'life story' of that 78 was until young Cliff picked it up? Forty-three years; did someone prize it for most of that time - or did it get around? No-one will ever know.

THE APPEAL FUND FOR THE PURCHASE OF BING'S ONE-TIME HOME

This fund remains open, and will do so, for a considerable time, as we have stated before. Donations, large and small are welcomed. Finally we hope to pass a worthwhile sum to our colleagues of THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY to help them in their purchase and to promote the memory of Bing. Donations should be sent to :

MRS. JEAN BIGNELL,
20 ST. ANDREWS AVENUE (not Close as we
WEMBLEY, erroneously said last
MIDD'X. HA0 2QB time!)

To add to those donors listed on page 5 of the previous issue of BING, we gratefully acknowledge the following:

JIM ABRAHAM (BRISTOL) SYLVIA LAWRENCE (CAMBRIDGE)
ANGELA BUDD (MAIDSTONE) JOHN HIGNELL (as above)

And on the subject of errors, in the last issue we referred to our charming Eileen Waters (at the Waldorf) as - ETHEL WATERS! Our apologies to Eileen for this unintended association of names.

Will regular, intending, or potential contributors to the Christmas issue of BING - to be posted in the first days of December - please bear that date in mind and let me have material by the middle of November at the latest? Thanks in anticipation; the workload is such that reminders are an extra and unnecessary chore !

Good, original, Christmas stories with a Bing-slant will be especially welcomed.

THE SOCIAL SCENE

MIKE CRAMPTON,
19, Carrholm Crescent,
Chapel Allerton,
LEEDS, West Yorks.

ctually, its in danger of becoming a social whirl! Understandable - Crosby folk are essentially sociable. London at the Waldorf in the Spring, under the courageous inspiration of John Marshall, and now Autumn in Leeds, with another attractive event in the North-East with Mike Crampton, address above, Tel: 0532 - 689556

As briefly indicated in the previous issue, Mike Crampton is organising his 18th consecutive 'party' at the Mansion Hotel, Rounday Park, Leeds for Sunday, 2nd October next. Seems for a change Michael is going for a "fish" meal mainly though any with a problem in this direction should contact him right away. (Your Editor is one of the problems - cannot stand fish in any form, or its presence!) Takes all sorts....tickets are £8.50 and Michael stresses this is the PRECISE cost of the meal, nothing has been added, to cover incidental expenses in the way of postage, petrol for innumerable journeys to the Mansion Hotel &c. So, please enclose either a stamped, addressed, envelope when writing, or at least, a stamp!

The format will be as in previous years - this is a house-party which just "growed and growed" and outgrew the house! Plenty of music all through and if you would like anything special played Mike will be glad to hear and it will be included on the tapes. Quizzes, conversation, congenial company, nothing "Ritzy" Mike em- , with informality the keynote. Enjoying yourself in fact to the sound of your favourite singer with kindred spirits.

Proceedings will start around 3pm - and no doubt guests will be arriving from around mid-day onwards if precedent is anything to go by. Personally, we would like this glorious summer to last until next March but no dount Rounday Park will be its glorious autumnal self, with autumn leaves drifting past the windows....

Let Michael know if you wsnt overnight accommodation - and bring your spare Crosbyana - records, books, &c. And we can look ahead! Michael is - to 1985 and the 35th Anniversary of the ICC. He's making big hints about a big-screen event...but if that's too far ahead (it will be the 20th annual consecutive event) we have news from the States. Happily, The Bing Crosby Historical Society keeps in close touch and we learn that 1984 will be the Centennial year of Tacoma. A special committee is putting together a year-long programme of events. The BCHS has been asked to use Tacoma's TRIBUTE TO BING as the highlight for May. More than that, Bob Lundberg tells us that he certainly will be visiting Britain in 1984 and has the idea to organise a real party! This would take in the usual British tourist spots (like Stratford and London) AND THE LEEDS PARTY. They hope that if the party is big enough they may even charter a plane.....its all happening - or going to!

AND SO TO GATESHEAD ! John Joy , 21 Birchfield Gardens, Gateshead, TYNE & WEAR (TELEPHONE 0632 - 878761) is busily organising his event for FRIDAY, 14th OCTOBER AT THE "FIVE BRIDGES HOTEL" Gateshead. The move is essential because previous venues have proved too small! This has to be a good sign - it will be what appears to be the quite sumptuous Washington Suite. It will start around 6pm and again quizzes , films, &c. will be the order. The meal is not finalised as yet but will be 3-course, plus coffee. Tickets for this 'do' are £5.00. Should overnight accommodation be needed, tell John as soon as possible.

From the brochures we've seen this must be one of the finest hotels in the North-East. Clearly, those mid-way, say, between Leeds and Gateshead have two quite splendid Crosby events to enjoy in October. AND ANYONE ELSE, FOR THAT MATTER. WILL BE NICE TO SEE YOU! 1983 will have proved to be our b ggest social year yet!

BING ON THE BOX

Although plenty of Crosby records continue to turn up on the radio we were, rather disconsolately, resigning ourselves to a blank on TV. Then just as we were completing this issue, that lovely bit of fun, IF I HAD MY WAY, turned up on BBC-T on the Tuesday after the bank-holiday, 30th August lsst. So another nice slice of Crosbyana came the way of the video-owners! No vulgarity, no foul language, no sexual deviations, no violence - but we're willing to gamble it was thoroughly enjoyed by millions. Good entertainment - as it used to be.

- characters, including the delightful Gloria Jean, and a string of good songs. Gloria would have seemed to have a glittering career before her when she played with Bing in this 1940 film - but it doesn't seem to have happened. What did happen to her - pretty, good voice... the ingredients were there.

CHAS. MARTIN, 18 Wootton Green Lane, Balsall Common, Nr. Coventry raised an interesting point in a recent letter:

"...just listening to THE EAST SIDE OF HEAVEN, so typically Bing and one that must have endeared him to many. And something else I noticed - the eight-bar introduction to this is the same as for I GET ALONGWITHOUT YOU VERY WELL, have you noticed? I think also it was used to introduce another song...."

Well now, I often get the feeling the same, or very similar, intro was used on different Bing records! It would take a researcher of the calibre of Bert Bishop, Colin Pugh or Lionel Pairpoint to pin this down - an exacting task. But I think it did happen.

Perhaps JOHN SCOTT TROTTER had favourite themes running through his mind and used them unconsciously. I doubt if he KNEW he was using the same introductions. Then again, the poor over-worked man didn't, perhaps, realise the aural scrutiny his efforts were going to get in the years ahead! If anyone, in addition to those named, has any examples we would be pleased to hear.

REGRETTABLY, some bad lapses in "proof-reading" occurred with the previous page and it is essential we correct them: Michael Crampton is at 19 Carrholm Crescent, Chapel Allerton, Leeds, West Yorks. In the third paragraph, it should read "..nothing "Ritzy" Mike emphasises..". Finally, in the last paragraph page 19, it should read: "AND SO TO GATESHEAD! JOHN JOYCE..." not JOY! These occur only in some issues but they are important points.

Members, especially those of the SOUTHERN BING CROSBY CLUB, will be pleased to know that after his troubles of the past few years, PHIL CLARKE is now permanently at 21 Stockheath Lane, Havant, Hants,PO9 3BU

MY GOOD FRIEND BING CROSBY

From the writings of the famous songwriter, HARRY TOBIAS, who takes up back to the breathless, exciting days when it was all blossoming.....

first heard Bing sing on the radio in 1931 from the Ambassador Hotel with Gus Arnheim's Orchestra where, of course, he was already creating a sensation with his powerful and unique singing style. The song was I SURRENDER, DEAR. I got an idea for a song that I thought would make a great follow-up title to the song he sang; I went down to the Cocoanut Grove at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles where Bing, Harry Barris and Al Rinker were featured in Arnheim's band as the Rhythm Boys.

I spoke to Harry Barris and told him I thought I had a great follow-up title to I SURRENDER, DEAR entitled AT YOUR COMMAND. He liked the idea and introduced me to Bing who approved. The next day the three of us met at Harry Barris's home and wrote the song.

Bing introduced the song at the Grove and then recorded it with Barris on the Brunswick label. I attended the recording session. When Bing sang AT YOUR COMMAND on the radio program, he created calls in the music stores coast-to-coast overnight. As a result of this demand, Jack Robbins, a prominent music publisher rushed to the coast from New York and paid us One Thousand Dollars advance royalties for the publishing rights to the song.

> The next morning, Bing, Barris and I ran to the bank to cash the check - and how we ran to the bank! One Grand in 1931 meant an awful lot of money during those Depression days.

During 1931 Bing featured WHAT IS IT? then recorded I'M GONNA GET YOU with the Gus Arnheim Band for Victor. He was the first to record SWEET AND LOVELY on Brunswick label, and I'M SORRY, DEAR on the same label.

Charles N. Daniel (Neil Moret), an outstanding composer of hit songs in that day, wrote the tunes for SWEET AND LOVELY, and I'M GONNA GET YOU. Bing was also the first to introduce SAIL ALONG SILV'RY MOON on his Kraft Radio Show and recorded it on Decca Records in 1937. The late and great Percy Wenrich, composer of WHEN YOU WORE A TULIP, PUT ON YOUR OLD GREY BONNET and MOONLIGHT BAY among other hits, wrote the melody and I wrote the lyrics.

My brothers Charlie and Henry and myself wrote a song called MISS YOU in 1929 which was originally recorded by Rudy Vallee and became our first three-way Tobias Brothers hit.

> BING RECORDED IT AGAIN ON DECCA IN 1942
> AND THIS REVIVAL PUT IT ON THE HIT
> PARADE AGAIN FOR MANY WEEKS.

In addition to the above song, he also recorded six of my

brother Charlie's songs, including MISS YOU, JUST A PRAYER AWAY, TRADE WINDS, LITTLE LADY MAKE-BELIEVE, ROSE O'DAY, etc. Other songs of ours that he featured on his Kraft Music Hall radio show were: ROLLEO ROLLING ALONG (The Bicycle Song), NO REGRETS, LOVE IS ALL, LOST AND FOUND, WAIT FOR ME, MARY and others.

I will always treasure the following wire Bing sent me on my Eightieth Birthday (80th) Party, September 1975:

DEAR HARRY,

VERY SORRY I CAN'T BE WITH YOU BUT I WANT TO CONGRATULATE YOU ON THIS HIGHLY DESERVED TRIBUTE. YOU HAVE DONE MUCH FOR POPULAR MUSIC AND WE ARE ALL IN YOUR DEBT.

(Signed) BING CROSBY

The sound of his voice will live on as a legacy, recorded in the hearts of all the lives he brightened with his God-gifted talents.

MY TRIBUTE TO BING: WE'LL ALL "MISS YOU".....

Elsewhere, HARRY TOBIAS also wrote: Songwriting is 10 per cent inspiration, and 90 per cent perspiration. The best songs in the world mean nothing unless you have, or cultivate, the ability to SELL them....that was why, when I heard that wonderful voice on the radio in 1931 I decided to meet BARRIS - AT THE GROVE.

It will be seen that Harry Tobias played quite a part in the early-Bing story.

There is one big mystery for us - the song WHAT IS IT? that Harry Tobias mentions as being featured by Bing in 1931. We've not heard this song mentioned before and have no recollection of it whatsoever.

There were few songs Bing sang in 1931 - and later - which did not become big hits. But this must have been one..... Between them, the Tobias Brothers wrote a very long list of prominent songs and were a solid part of "the golden age of song-writing".

And just as the above was prepared, came the news that IRA GERSHWIN, brother of the famous GEORGE, had died.....when asked which came first - the words or the melody, Ira was reported as saying: THE CONTRACT!

It is largely - and rightfully - believed that the career of song-writing is hazardous and heartbreaking, often dependent for success on a single little quirk of fate. One wonders how some of today's 'popular' songs ever saw the light of day.... leave alone publishing. Assuredly, in the old days, to have your song sung by Bing Crosby was one of those quirks of fate! It brought instant success.....

BIG DATE FOR ROY CHAPPELL

ROY CHAPPELL, ICC member who so delighted the large gathering at the Waldorf Astoria in London last May, will be appearing at THE QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL, London, (South Bank complex, adjacent to the ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL) on 5th October next. No doubt members in the London area will be especially interested.

The occasion is a concert in tribute to the late Sid Phillips' (1907-1973) whose band was very prominent for its stylish Dixieland playing up until Sid's death. Roy frequently acted as vocalist for the band in the middle and late '60's. Also appearing as another vocalist will be DENNY DENNIS, who became known as "The British Bing Crosby" in the 30's on account of his stylish singing with the renowned Roy Fox and Ambrose orchestras of the time. Later Denny sang with a number of famous outfits including the Squadronaires and, of course, Sid Phillips.

The band will be led by Cyril Glover on clarinet - on which instrument of course, Sid Phillips was a virtuoso - and will include KENNY BALL, trumpet, Ross Mitchell, drums, and IVOR MAIRANTS, guitar-band - the latter also was a stalwart in the Roy Fox band. Broadcaster SHEILA TRACY will be the compere - or it should be commere.

BOX OFFICE is at the Royal Festival Hall, London, SE1 8XX: Tickets £4.00, £3.50, £3.00, £2.50 and £2.00. The concert is in aid of Entertainment Artists Benevolent Fund, Brinsworth House, Twickenham, and Cancer Research.

We feel the concert will be good in its own right - the presence of ROY CHAPPELL will be a great attraction for many.

The address for the box office is for POSTAL bookings; for telephone bookings the number is 01-928-3191

NEIL ROBINSON, 4 Hillcrest Avenue, Newton Rd., Burton-on-Trent, Staffs offers a selection of Frank Sinatra LPs for sale; excellent condition, some unplayed. S.A.E. for list.
How Neil can make this offer is another story; sufficient to say that left to him they would ALL be unplayed! Which goes to show how scrupulously fair we are...!

ON THE FOLLOWING TWO PAGES is another selection of famous Crosby song lyrics. These were surprisingly popular in the last issue of BING. As one reader wrote: "It was good to see the lyrics in print even if Bing's diction is so immaculate that we know them anyway!"

WE EARNESTLY ASK MEMBERS not to skim over page 3 too quickly, with the chance of missing the subs reminder "X" should it be there! At our annual subscription it will be realised that we operate on a razor's edge economically. Failure to renew promptly MIGHT result in you NOT being on the printing list for the next issue !

SOUTH OF THE BORDER

South of the border down Mexico Way,
That's where I fell in love,
When stars above came out to play;
And now as I wander,
My thoughts ever stray,
South of the border down Mexico Way.

She was a picture in old Spanish lace,
Just for a tender while,
I kissed the smile upon her face;
For it was fiesta,
And we were so gay,
South of the border down Mexico Way.

Then she sighed as she whispered "Manana",
Never dreaming that we were parting,
And I lied as I whispered "Manana",
For our tomorrow never come,

South of the Border I rode back one day.
There in a veil of white,
By candlelight she knelt to pray,
The Mission bells told me,
That I mustn't stay,
South of the Border down Mexico Way.
Ay! Ay! Ay! Ay!
Ay! Ay! Ay! Ay!

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A long time ago, a million years
The best things in life were absolutely free.
But no one appreciated a sky that was always blue,
And no one congratulated a moon that was always new,
So it was planned that they would vanish now and then,
And you must pay before you get them back again;
That's what storms were made for
And you shouldn't be afraid.

For ev'ry time it rains, it rains pennies from heaven.
Don't you know each cloud contains pennies from heaven?
You'll find your fortune falling
All over town.
Be sure that your umbrella
Is upside down.
Trade them for a package of Sunshine and flowers.
If you want the things you love,
You must have showers.
So when you hear it thunder,
Don't run under a tree,
There'll be pennies from heaven
For you and me.

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Now Is The Hour

Now is the hour
When we must say goodbye;
Soon you'll be sailing
Far across the sea,
While you're away
O please remember me,
When you return you'll find
me waiting here.

I'll dream of you
If you will dream of me;
Each hour I'll miss you
Here across the sea.
It's not goodbye
It's just a sweet adieu,
Someday I'll sail across the
seas to you.

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BROTHER, CAN YOU SPARE A DIME?

Once I built a railroad, made it run,
Made it race against time,
Once I built a railroad, now it's done,
Brother, can you spare a dime?

Once I built a tower to the sun,
Brick and rivet and lime,
Once I built a tower, now it's done,
Brother, can you spare a dime?

Once in khaki suits, gee, we looked swell,
Full of that Yankee doodle-de-dum,
Half a million boots went sloggin' thro' hell,
And I was the kid with the drum.

Say, don't you remember they called me Al,
It was Al all the time,
Say, don't you remember I'm your pal!
Brother can you spare a dime?

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SWINGING ON A STAR

A mule is an animal with long funny ears,
He kicks up at anything he hears,
His back is brawny but his brain is weak,
He's just plain stupid with a stubborn streak,
And by the way if you hate to go to school,
You may grow up to be a mule.

Or would you like to swing on a star,
Carry moonbeams home in a jar,
And be better off than you are,
Or would you rather be a pig?

A pig is an animal with dirt on his face,
His shoes are a terrible disgrace,
He's got no manners when he eats his food,
He's fat and lazy and extremely rude,
But if you don't care a feather or a fig,
You may grow up to be a pig.

Or would you like to swing on a star,
Carry moonbeams home in a jar,
And be better off than you are,
Or would you rather be a fish?

A fish won't do anything but swim in a brook,
He can't write his name or read a book,
To fool the people is his only thought,
And though he's slippery he still gets caught,
But then if that sort of life is what you wish,
You may grow up to be a fish.

And all the monkeys aren't in the zoo,
Every day you meet quite a few,
So you see it's all up to you.
You can be better than you are,
You could be SWINGING ON A STAR.

© Chappell Morris Ltd.

WELL, DID YOU EVAH

Sinatra: I have heard, among this clan, you are called the forgotten man. Crosby: Is that what they're saying? Well did you evah, what a swell party this is.

S: And have you heard the story of, a boy, a girl, unrequited love? C: Sounds like pure soap opera. S: I may cry, tune in tomorrow. C: What a swell party this is.

C: What frames, what frocks. S: What broads. C: What furs, what rocks. S: They're beautiful. C: Why I've never seen such gaiety. S: Neither did I. C: It's all just too, too, exquis really.

S: This French champagne. C: Domestic. Both: So good for the brain. S: That's what I was going to say. C: You know you're a brilliant fellow. S: Thank you. C: Drink up Jack. S: Please don't eat that glass my friend.

C: Have you heard about dear Blanche, got run down by an ovalar she? S: No! C: Don't worry, she's a game girl you know, got up and finished fourth. S: The kid's got guts.

C: Having a nice time? S: Grab a line. S: Have you heard that Mimsie Star, she got pinched in the Astor bar? C: Sauced again, huh? S: She was stoned. C: Well did you evah? S: Never. Both: What a swell party this is.

S: It's great. C: Oh it's great. S: It's grand. C: So grand. Both: It's wooooonderland. C: We sing. S: We sing. C: So rare. S: So rare. Both: Like old Camenbert. Both: Like ba ba rhum. C: Ba ba ba bom. S: Don't dig that kind of crooning, chum. C: You must be one of the newer tellers.

Both: Have you heard, it's in the stars. Next July we collide with Mars. Well did you evah. What a swell party, a swell party, a swelegant, elegant party this is.

C: I drink to your health. S: Now, let's drink to your wealth. C: You're my bon ami S: Hey that's French! Both: Liberty, Fraternity.

Both: Have you heard . . . (rpt.)

© Chappell & C

A CROSBY QUIZ

For amusement only..... or aggravation ?

1. In a 1935 song Bing refers to himself by name. What song?
2. In another of the same year, he refers to one of his earlier big songs by name. What are the two songs? i.e. the song he sang, and the song he referred to in it?
3. Actually, both songs came from a film - which?
4. Can you name any other songs from this film?
5. Which outfit accompanied Bing on the commercial recordings?
6. In DISSERTATION ON A STATE OF BLISS, on the recording Bing is accompanied by Patti Andrews. But with whom did Bing sing it in the film THE COUNTRY GIRL?
7. In BING last time we gave a list of leading ladies in Bing's films. Can you recognise them by their real names?

   (a)Mary Kaumeyer (b)Marilyn Louis (c) Sarah Jane Fulks.
8. Can you make a connection between the following:

   SING YOU SINNERS and The Keystone Cops?
   Road to Mandalay and Beach of Dreams?
   ITS THE DREAMER IN ME and a collar?
9. Can you name a dozen (or so) Bing recordings with a single word title
10. On which "new" album, i.e. made in his last London burst, did Bing sing SEND IN THE CLOWNS ?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 50

On the page opposite is one of those BING THROUGH THE AGES features we like to present: It is full of clues as to the date! Bing must have made the British brewers glow with pleasure - but I doubt if he got a big cheque for his approbation of their beer; it seems to be unsolicited. Note Bing speaks with pride of his sons...pity they came from a different mould. Or Gary did, at least.... the "romantic baritone" singing for CBS is not relevant to the story - just a nice piece of decoration.

To those who inevitably, and naturally, ask WHERE IS LESLIE GAYLOR? He's at home in the Isle of Wight, reasonably well thank you. Les sends his best wishes to everyone and explains that work-pressures have been especially onerous of late. Added to that he has recently lost his aged mother (but not before she had both legs amputated, its grievous to report); so, that involved a lot of hospital visiting. In these combined circumstances Leslie has had no time to put pen to paper. He wants us to know that his interest, enthusiasm, and dedication are quite undimmed and he will certainly be with us again in the Christmas issue of BING.

'Sure, British beer is best, but it would make me stout'

FIFTY-SEVEN-year-old Bing Crosby, the veteran pop idol with the fattest bank balance in the business and a figure as slim as a ballet dancer, views his present visit to Britain with alarm.

"It's that British beer of yours," the Old Groaner told me as we chatted on the Shepperton studio set of his latest picture, "The Road to Hong Kong."

SHOW BUSINESS

by JACK BENTLEY

"I just love the stuff. Back home I don't have any worries about putting on weight, because the beer is so tasteless I can't face it.

"But if I drank as much as I liked of this lovely bitter beer they sell over here I'd have a paunch in no time.

"My food diet is no problem—I always order as much as I want, and then just eat half of it.

"But boy, British beer is a problem and a half."

I told Bing that of all the many big stars I had met he seemed to have the fewest problems in life.

Bing gave me that famous slow smile, drew at his pipe and said:

"I guess I've just about got everything to make a man happy. After five sons, I have a daughter at last.

"And my wife is expecting another baby in October."

Bing—he's so slim.

A wow

I ASKED Bing: "Any qualms about the hellraising Crosby juniors?"

"No," he said. "Gary's a great success, and the trio of Philip Dennis and Lindsay are wowing 'em in cabaret back in the States.

"I guess they've all straightened out fine."

Why is Bing one of the few great American stars who has never made a public appearance in Britain?

He told me: "Stage shows are tough work. I don't even do them in the States—except for charity.

"I figure I can get over to the British public by doing TV shows while I'm over here."

I told Bing that his brother Bob once remarked to me that the easy-going, nonchalant manner for which the Old Groaner is famous was really a carefully studied act.

"Maybe that was right once," said Bing. "But now I must have got into the easy-groove, because I don't have to act taking it easy."

Bing went off to do a scene with Bob Hope, and "taking it easy" was a masterpiece of understatement.

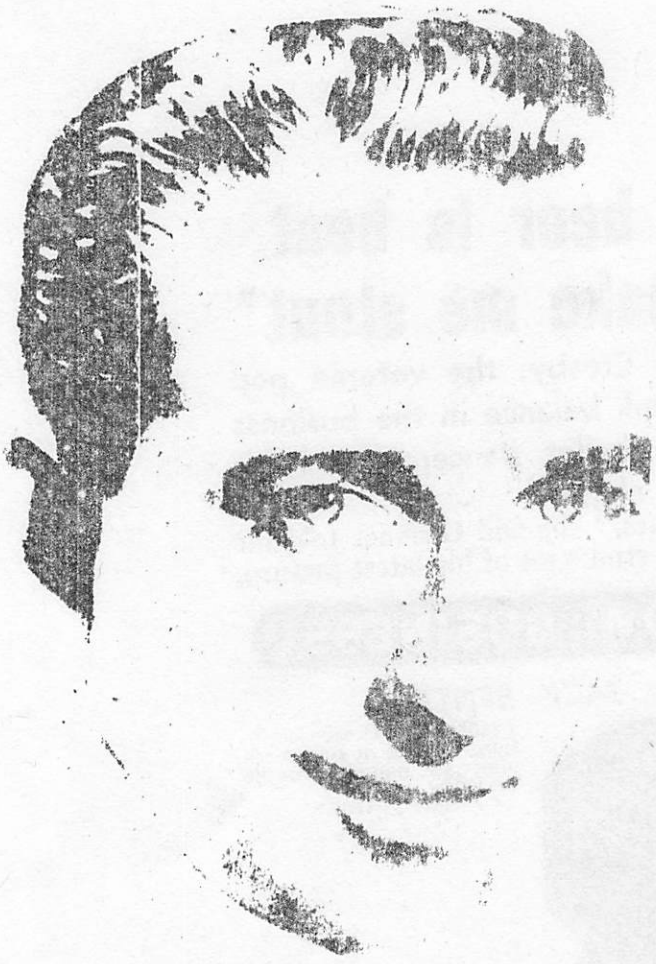
Delight

BING and Bob's off-the-cuff dialogue was a script-writer's nightmare, but an audience's delight.

"Tell me," I said when Bing returned, "have you ever had a really worried moment about your career?"

Said Bing: "I sure have. In the thirties I entered a radio 'Bing Crosby Imitation' contest in New York under the name of Charlie Senevsky.

"I came **THIRD.**"



INTERESTING AND BRAVE VENTURE

TEDDY JOHNSON and his delightful wife, PEARL CARR, used to be seen and heard regularly on radio and TV until those media opted for rock 'n punk and showed a predilection for what can only be termed 'caricature' singers. We discovered that Teddy Johnson was a great Crosby admirer when he went to America for the Bing-statue unveiling at Gonzaga and entertained at the various functions, together with ROY CHAPPELL. Now he has proved this point completely with a new show, details of which follow this report. The first show was presented at the Sunderland Empire (sounds like the good old days!) Many of our members from the North-East and indeed, elsewhere, attended. The show is reported for us by member PHIL MORGAN, of Jesmond, Newcastle-upon-Tyne who writes:

The first performance of THE BING CROSBY STORY was given in a 'one-night-stand' on Monday July 11 at the Sunderland Empire. Unfortunately, the show wasn't very well publicised in the North East and but for spotting the piece in the NORTHERN ECHO I would have known nothing of it. And would, therefore, have missed a really first-class performance by Teddy Johnson. Regrettably, the theatre was only half-full, due no doubt to the aforementined lack of publicity.

Nevertheless, the audience was very appreciative of Teddy's fine presentation. He told the story of Bing's great career in a show lasting almost three hours, and he himself was on stage for practically all that time except for three or four instrumental items by Harry Gold and his band. He sang close on fifty Crosby songs in his own style, not falling into the trap of trying to imitate Bing - who, after all, is unique. I must admit, however, I'd never before appreciated just how good a singer Teddy Johnson is in his own right.

It would have been good - and just - if some newspaper reviews had appeared on this performance but I've seen none and this is hard on Teddy, Pearl and Harry Gold and his band. They all worked so hard to produce such a top-class tribute to Bing. I tried to find out the show's intinerary in order that members could have prior notice, and also because I would have liked to have written to Teddy, congratulating and thanking him. But alas, I didn't succeed.

No programmes were available at the Empire largely I feel because Teddy wasn't absolutely sure precisely which songs he was going to include until the show itself! He didn't stick to chronological order and rather darted about as regards date, but from memory he certainly sang the following:

Where the blue of the night/Wistful and Blue/Muddy Water/Side by Side/So the bluebirds and the blackbirds got together/I surrender, dear/Its been a long, long time/It must be true/You are my sunshine/Wait 'til the sun shines Nellie/White Christmas/The

Road to Morocco/Now you has jazz/ True Love/Straight Down the Middle/ Fancy meeting you here/But Beautiful/When I leave the world behind/ There's nothing that I haven't sung about/Wrap your troubles in dreams/At your command/Please/ Learn to croon/Thanks/Temption/ Have I told you lately?/Sam's Song/ Row,Row, Row/In the cool, cool, of the evening/Zing a little zong/ Y'all come/Love Thy Neighbour/I love you truly/Love is just around the corner/Its easy to remember/ Pennies from Heaven/Moonlight becomes you/Sunday, Monday or always/ Sweet Leilani/I've got a pocketful of dreams/Moonlight becomes you/ Swinging on a star/I'll be seeing you/Too-ral-loo-ral-loo-ral/Mc-Namara's band, Whiffenpoof song/ Galway Bay and Dear Hearts and Gentle people. Surely a most comprehensive Crosby collection!

For me, the show had two high-spots. Teddy told the story of how, when Bing and the Rhythm Boys were barred at the Coconut Grove, Harry Barris and Bing had gone into a studio and recorded a Harry Barris song with Bing accompanied only by Barris on piano. The song, of course, was AT YOUR COMMAND, and Teddy told us that he hadn't even heard the song until a couple of years ago. The pianist in the Harry Gold band used the exact arrangement of Harry Barris and the two of them performed the song. It got a tremendous reception. The other high-spot was his performance of SO THE BLUEBIRDS AND THE BLACKBIRDS GOT TOGETHER. Again, he explained how Bing used to use a cymbal when he was singing with the Rhythm Boys and, using their arrangement, he sang the song solo, with just the pianist to accompany. Whether or not it was the fact it was hearing it performed live, I don't know, but the effect was electric. Even the members of Harry Gold's band, no doubt much used to performers, were very enthusiastic over this and applauded Teddy along with the audience.

And I certainly mustn't leave out Teddy's wife, Pearl Carr, who had one solo only - BUT BEAUTIFUL - and joined Teddy in three duets - WAIT 'TIL THE SUN SHINES, NELLIE, FANCY MEETING YOU HERE and, naturally, TRUE LOVE.

A really splendid show and I feel sure that Teddy Johnson's terrific efforts should be brought to the attention of members.

Editor: We warmly agree, and hope members will keep an eye open for any news of the show in their town.

In the heading to Phil's report, we used the word 'brave'. Summer time, and particularly in a heat-wave, is notoriously the worst time to put on a live theatre show - there are so many counter-attractions! So it was particularly courageous, we think, to put this on in such conditions. The support, bearing in mind these conditions, was reasonable. We have already mentioned the popularity both Teddy and Pearl once enjoyed on the air.

Many members will also know that Harry Gold's is a famous one in vintage dance band circles, as well as to the present day. Indeed, he was a prominent member of the legendary Roy Fox band for many years but has run his famous 'Pieces of Eight' for many years now.

It does sound, too, from Phil Morgan's fine account that it would be great if the BBC or ITV could be interested in what Teddy Johnson is doing - but, as we said, singers with VOICES, are having a very thin time - mainly, we say, because we do know that Val Doonican puts on a pleasant show, as do a few others. It sounds, however, as if the Teddy Johnson version of THE BING CROSBY STORY would contain a lot more interest than Val's.

Supposing we drop a line to the Heads of Light Entertainment at both, BBC and ITV? We will, for a start.....

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The BING CROSBY Story

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With

TEDDY JOHNSON

and

PEARL CARR

Music by

HARRY GOLD & HIS PIECES OF EIGHT

Prices: Stalls £3·50, £3·00, £1·50
Dress Circle £3·50
Upper Circle £2·00

Directed By
BRYAN JOHNSON

Crooner's first night at the Empire

SINGER Teddy Johnson will walk on to the stage at Sunderland Empire on Monday for two hours of "self-indulgence."

With his wife Pearl Carr, and Harry Gold and his Pieces of Eight, Teddy — right — will be presenting the first theatre performance of the Bing Crosby Story.

A Bing fan since boyhood he has been researching the singer's life for the past few years and explains: "We have done cabaret acts in America and on cruise liners featuring Bing's songs.

"But I have always wanted to do a full length theatre show. I suppose you could call it an excuse to be self-indulgent," he added.

In a career spanning over half a century iBng was involved with over 3,000 songs. "I've tried to put together a balanced programme of wards and music but you can imagine the difficulty in choosing numbers for a two-hour show." Teddy said.

CAGNEY ON CROSBY

One legend on another, it might be said. JAMES CAGNEY must be considered one of the all-time greats of Hollywood, a great artist who also provided us with a big surprise. He was regarded for years as the brash, cocksure, ruthless gangster, going to the "chair" - or escaping it - and as liable to slap women around as men! He made really memorable gangster films alongside such people as Edward G. Robinson, Humphrey Bogart, George Raft and others. So what a surprise it was when it was also revealed that Cagney was a great song-and-dance man! Seems James Cagney has written a book, when we cannot tell from the excerpt sent us, but it contains yet another view on Bing. Of all the hundreds of such views we have read over the years, including a recent highly disagreeable one! - we find this very interesting, coming from such a valid source; the book is entitled CAGNEY ON CAGNEY but alas we have no publishing details. Here is the extract:

...another group occupying our attention in 1942 was the Actors' Committee of the National Victory committee. As chairman of that unit I can attest that we did a lot of night-work. I remember Porter Hall saying that our epitaph should read 'Committeed to death'. But it was little enough we were doing for the war effort, and as was only fitting, a number of us were called together to go out on the road to plug the sale of War Bonds. This was the Victory Caravan which went cross-country for three weeks. We had quite a group. There were Cary Grant, Pat O'Brien, Frank McHugh, Laurel and Hardy, Bert Lahr, Groucho Marx, Charles Boyer and others, plus the most beautiful assembly of gals anybody ever cast eyes upon. Among them were Claudette Colbert, Joan Bennett, Joan Blondell, Arlene Whelan, Olivia de Havilland - such beauties. Bob Hope was our emcee until Chicago, where Bing Crosby took over.

I had never worked with Bing before, and here was a great opportunity to see at first-hand the way this performer did it. Bing had always been a remarkable fella to me, and I had always thought that everything he did was so relaxed and effortless. Not so.

At our opening show at Soldier Field, Chicago, there was a crowd of 130,000, with 30,000 of them behind the platform we were working. Bob Hope was doing his stuff and he said: "Well, I know you're waiting to hear the Groaner...." And the place went crazy. Bing walked out to a reception for which the adjective 'triumphant' is inadequate.

He stood there in that very humble, charming way of his, wearing a brass-buttoned coat, rust trousers,

brown-and-white shoes, and a light green shirt that seemed to verify the legend that he's colour-blind. After the audience explosion died down, Bing said: "Whadda wanna hear?" and they exploded again until the stadium walls nearly buckled. After they subsided, he said: "You wanna leave it to me?" and they blew up again. Finally, he said, "Hit me, Al," and our orchestra leader, Al Newman, started his boys off on BLUES IN THE NIGHT. They had only played the first two bars when the audience went into rapturous applause once more. Bing finished that song, and never in my life have I heard anything like it. I got the traditional goose-pimples just standing there, listening. He did another; same thing.

And if I ever wanted a demonstration of how it felt to live through that old vaudeville phrase - "What an act to follow!" this was it! I was next on the bill, waiting in the wings to do my little stint, 'Yankee Doodle Dandy'. Fortunately, I had some good natural support in the form of my Civil War soldier's uniform, eight cute girls, plus eight American flags blowing in the wind. I danced my brains out, the girls waved the flags energetically, and the entire cast came out and joined in THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER, and this was, I can tell you, an experience.

But I've almost forgotten the point of the story, which is that when Bing came off-stage, the perspiration on him was an absolute revelation to me. Here he had been to all appearances perfectly loose and relaxed, but not at all. He was giving everything he had in every note he sang and the apparent effortlessness was a part of his very hard work. I can remember the first time I had any fixed opinions about Bing. Up at the Vineyard in 1938 I heard one of his radio shows, and I knew at once this was a most extraordinary fella. I actually started to write a piece about him, 'THE MIRACLE KNOWN AS CROSBY', but after a page or two I stopped. I realised he was just beginning, and would add up to even more than he was. So I dropped it, thinking perhaps I'd save up my thoughts for the proper time. If this is the time, I'm glad to report my feelings about a man I always watch when he's available to public view.

Editor: This, surely, is quite a remarkable tribute from one great artist to another. We've never subscribed to the view - most often expressed by Bing himself - that it was all "fun and luck". We think Bing was sincere when he said this - but it was just his inherent nature to "switch on" when required to perform, and it came naturally to him. But that never meant he didn't work hard. Nobody gets to the top of ANY tree without unrelenting effort. We think of the highly pertinent, and shrewd observation of Bing's younger brother Bob who once remarked, apropos Bing's 'lazy and lucky rise': "Yeah, he just rolled uphill to success". It says it all, really.

Rolled uphill, indeed!

DISCROSBY

.....remembering Bing's records through the years.....

On the opposite page can be seen how an ordinary newspaper greeted the biggest Bing record bonanza ever - the fifteen LPs numbered BING 1 to 15 by Brunswick. And in passing, it might be mentioned how startling it is to some of us that it is now almost 30 years since the long-playing micro-groove record made its appearance. True, we have many members who do not know the days BEFORE the LP! But to large numbers of us the introduction of the LP came as an unbelievable boon. This fabulous issue of 189 great Crosby songs opened up a new world of collecting; in some cases it revived collecting which had tended, perhaps, to fade as the years rolled on. It was around 1962/3, if we remember rightly, that these 15 albums were announced, which means Bing had been a worldwide topmost star for more than 30 years.

*****

The old 78s, by their very nature, had become worn, no matter how carefully looked after. Now, in one fell swoop as it were, those well-remembered songs from Crosby films were available in new, pristine, condition, allowing the old 78s to be disposed of. The strange thing is, despite this brand-new set, this windfall, very few did actually dispose of their 78s! Perhaps sentiment came into it.

*****

There was, of course, one major problem: How could you afford fifteen LPs in one go, no matter how desperately you wanted them? Happily, they didn't have to be purchased as a complete set; they could be bought one or two at a time. And what a delight it was to scan the listings and decide the priority of the various albums now available! Off-hand, I think the price of each album was around 30/- (£1.50p) and it goes without saying, without harping on it, that £1.50 then was an entirely different proposition to £1.50 today!

*****

And now, 30 years later, those BING'S HOLLYWOOD albums are still very much in demand. Indeed, many members cherish the hope that even now the whole set might be reissued. Sadly, we feel this to be the remotest of possibilities now, such is the record scene of today. I suppose there was a small fear when these 15 albums were released they might disappear before we could buy them all - but there's another major difference from today's scene. Records then stayed in the catalogue for quite a long while, usually years, unlike those 'modern' times when they seem to disappear after a few weeks.

*****

Also across the page you can see the "Thank You, Bing!" advertisement that the publishers of AMOR, AMOR placed in a trade magazine. The song was big at the time Bing came here for the first

(cont. page 36-->

the entertainers

BING BLITZ!

Back: the Old Groaner with FIFTEEN LPs

ONCE upon a time there was Bing Crosby and he lived happily ever after.

His world is everyone's pipe-dream.

A world of half-awake good humour, carpet slippers, golf with Eisenhower, golf with Kennedy, hummed lullabies and whistled cheer-up songs. A world in which the only villain is Bob Hope.

Brunswick, as an act of faith, are putting out 15 simultaneous Crosby L.P.s under the title **Bing's Hollywood** — easily the biggest album to be issued by any artist. (You can buy them one at a time, of course.)

So casual

They contain 189 songs from more than 40 films made between 1934 and 1956. What more can I say?

Bing's not fashionable, but several generations of singers have learned from him the art of being casual without being sloppy, and yet another generation should be learning this lesson.

So far I've heard four of the series and the variety is wonderful. My favourite is number ten, the songs from *Blue Skies*.

If you can't afford to lay down a cellar for your son, this vintage series is a good substitute.

WELCOME BING!!

—and thanks a million for your terrific rendering of

AMOR AMOR

Southern Music Publishing Co. Ltd.
8, Denmark Street
London, W.C.2
TEMple Bar 4525-7

time to Europe, en route to entertain the troops on the Continent. Apart from his recording of AMOR, AMOR he sang it many times on the radio here - members have probably seen the film snippet of Bing singing it at The Stagedoor Canteen when he was introduced by his old friend, Bea Lillie. And he performed it also in the historic link-up with Glenn Miller for an AFN broadcast just before the latter so tragically disappeared over the Channel. He still sings it - often - in our household!

*****

To return, however, to BING'S HOLLYWOOD; this was a Decca project and Bing's marathon contract with that company didn't begin until 1934 so that films earlier than that year - including the memorable BIG BROADCAST of 1932 - could not be covered. It was a very happy follow-up therefore when CBS came up with the double album BING CROSBY IN HOLLYWOOD, 1930-1934 which, starting with KING OF JAZZ, covered the Crosby films up to 1934, including such classics as THE DAY YOU CAME ALONG, THANKS, PLEASE, HERE LIES LOVE, DOWN THE OLD OX ROAD and so on.

*****

It was many years later that the inspiration came to issue the true grass-roots of Bing in films, namely the unforgettable songs not commecially recorded, from the celebrated Mack Sennett 'shorts'. This truly might be described as the "icing on the Bing films cake"! EVERY TIME MY HEART BEATS, LOVABLE, AUF WIEDERSEHEN, MY DEAR, DREAM HOUSE, not forgetting WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT where the genial and delighted Bing-fan policeman assures us "It's him all right!" when Bing whistles were thus available to us in, for their antiquity, really good condition.

*****

So, it was 15 + 2 + 1 making 18 albums covering Bing's film songs up to 1954. Thenceforth, single albums such as WHITE CHRISTMAS and HIGH SOCIETY continued to make the coverage of Crosby film songs quite comprehensive. And it goes without saying that any collection of Bing Crosby recordings inevitably contain film songs for the truth is that practically every film song became a big hit.

*****

In the previous issue of BING, Leslie Gaylor was regretting that the songs from the Longines set receive scant air time; in fact, it is difficult to recollect ANY playings from this set which might fairly be described as the least known of all Crosby collections and is, in fact, faintly mysterious! To give it its full presentation title it is THE LONGINES SYMPHONETTE SOCIETY presents BING CROSBY'S GOLDEN TREASURY, THE SONGS I LOVE. Longines, of course, is the world-famous watch and jewellery firm. It is not easy to appreciate how such an establishment had such a SOCIETY, but it did and it issued several collections of records.

*****

Considerable excitement was generated in Crosbyana when news of this tremendous issue gained ground in 1966 - a time when new Bing recordings were getting scarce. Six albums of well-loved songs! It sounded too good to be true. And it was, alas.

*****

At least, initially it was too good to be true for when the set became available Bing was featured on only half-a-dozen titles! The set was mainly orchestral - and a very fine orchestra was used, too, conducted by Mishel Piastro in "Living Sound" as the collection was also described. Plainly Bing had been approached to lend his name to this orchestral collection as songs he did like by the Longines Symphonette Society - but it was difficult not to get the feeling of "Ever been had?" One was entitled to feel that there had been some almost deliberate misleading of purchasers.

*****

This must have been realised for subsequently the collection was reissued - and Bing's vocal contribution had been stepped up to thirty-six songs, e.g. three per side per record. In fact, checking one sees there are no less than three separate sets of numbers for the records. Bing's singing was "dubbed" over the already recorded orchestral tracks, not that this is unduly apparent, of course. In its 1969 form the set, with the added Bing contributions, naturally became much more attractive.

*****

The producer at the BBC, Ken Evans, said he would get the sets from the BBC Library; but extensive though this library is it dan by no means be certain that it holds the Longines set! For the truth is it was never a commercial issue - at least, not in the sense we understand that term. One bought it from Longines and it did not appear in record shops (except possibly in some isolated instances); but on reflection, it is almost certain that Les Gaylor made the BBC aware of its existence and prevailed upon the BBC to obtain it!

*****

The recordings really are superb - in stereo, of course - and the arrangements are excellent. Bing is in totally relaxed mood, almost casual, yet the songs are full of fine, deep notes and Bing's inevitable fine phrasing. But without doubt the really astonishing feature is that in this collection of great songs (as the title of the set indicates) Bing was recording them - the 36 he sang - for the first time! Which, considering his enormous output, was quite remarkable. FRIENDLY PERSUASION is a particularly fine performance by Bing; and in RIVER, STAY 'WAY FROM MY DOOR, he slips in one of his adroit touches! He sings 'River stay 'way from my door...' and after a pause, adds '...recede!' And in ONE FOR MY BABY, he casually remarks to the bartender '..I'll pick up the tab in the morning...' In MY PRAYER he ends up by swooping down to some of the lowest notes he ever sang.

And, of course, with this set there were no song-duplications - usually the bugbear of Crosby albums and collections. All the songs by Bing were "first-off", indeed, "one-off" performances, adding considerably to

the essentially uniqueness of the set. While the orchestra is a large and excellent one, many who possess the set have taped just Bing's efforts so that they may be played as a cohesive Crosby performance rather than have the orchestra playing intervening numbers. But in truth, the orchestra itself is well worth hearing, in excellent stereo.

*****

Thus the "Longines set" on which we have dwelt for the benefit of many who have written expressing puzzlement; it only remains to say that the six albums were beautifully packaged in durable materials. The price cannot now be recalled with exactitude but it is believed it was in the region of £8/9 for the six records though no doubt someone with a better memory might be able to correct us on that figure.

*****

It was no mean feat, we feel, for the compilers of the Longines set to find 80-odd songs that Bing had (mostly) not previously recorded; particularly so as they are virtually all hit songs from the past.

*****

On page 48 of the previous issue (in TRACK EVENTS) we printed a list of lovely songs Bing had sung sent by one of our disc consultants - songs Bingsang obviously in the very early days of the Kraft Music Hall. Some of the songs indicate their date. This was LIONEL PAIRPOINT who was keenly bent on tantalizing us! He added he hadn't even a bad copy of any of 'em! And neither have I! So that answers, I'm afraid, the several members who have urgently asked that they put on tape!

*****

In fact, judging by some of the titles I would say they came very early indeed in Bing's Kraft Music Hall shows - or even earlier, early and mid-30's. In fact, possibly even BEFORE Bing's shows were being recorded. Lionel's selection came from his comprehensive notes/lists which nevertheless, he maintains are "shabby". But, I often get the feeling that nothing, or little, is impossible and that SOMEONE SOMEWHERE has these songs on tape. The most likely source would have been the late and sorely-missed Bob Roberts. If anyone had them, Bob would have done. And its possible he passed them on to various people before his passing. If anyone CAN throw light on them, or more importantly, dubs! - it would be great.

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And perhaps we could ask Lionel Pairpoint to stop his mouth-watering antics!

*****

Bing singing DINNER FOR ONE, PLEASE JAMES, SERENADE IN THE NIGHT, and THE MUSIC GOES ROUND AND AROUND just as examples from the list would indeed be an experience.

*****

We've digressed for in this feature we talk about records - not imaginary impossibilities. Blame Lionel - and we had to answer those who had written!

*****

BING LETTERS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR are always welcome, and appear to be a popular feature. We would like to say there is no 'probationary' period - new members are as cordially invited to write their views as those with umpteen years in the Circle ! Address:

REG BRISTO,
7 Greenmeadow Close,
CWMBRAN,
GWENT, NP44 4PJ

NEIL ROBINSON, 4 Hillcrest Aven., Newton Rd., Burton-on-Trent, DE15 OTZ:

I inserted the following advertisement in our local paper - without getting results:

> £5 offered for 78rpm record Columbia 4310 Don Clark orchestra: 33845

The wording would be described by Bob Hope as 'dealing from the bottom of the pack'. The only response, however, was from an 11-year-old who - excited by the thought of an immediate fortune - stated 'My grannie has got a lot of records by Don Clarke Five'. I pointed out, alas, he was almost certainly referring to the Dave Clarke Five (a pop-group) which was not quite the same thing. But he enquired 'Aren't these worth £5 each?' I let him down lightly by just saying 'No'.

I thought the idea was worth a try. One never knows what 78s are lying around in houses about the country. Others might give it a try in their local papers?

> Editor: 'Dealing from the bottom of the pack' meaning Neil was neatly, if cunningly, endeavouring to obtain Bing's first-ever recording (I'VE GOT THE GIRL) without the owner knowing what a historic disc he owned! I suppose it depends on just how many copies of this record were sold in Britain. Pretty few, I would hazard a guess. Made in 1926, it probably reached here in '27 and records weren't selling the way they did later in the 30's. It would have been a fairly obscure dance-band recording; and - what a thought! - if it had had 'Vocal Refrain by Bing Crosby' it probably wouldn't have done much better - in 1927!

RAY MORRIS, 35 St. Ives Grove, Leeds, LS12 3RR: About Bing's films on the box, for years I've been wondering what on earth has happened to DIXIE? I saw it once in 1943, I believe, when I was stationed in Scotland and I got a pass to Glasgow to see it. Since then, it seems to have completely disappeared. As I remembe it, it was a very entertaining film and contains one of my favourite Bing songs of all-time - IF YOU PLEASE. I don't know if you can throw any light on the matter or maybe start some agitation going but I would certainly like to see it again.

> Editor: DIXIE, Bing's "minstrel" film was indeed made and released in 1943. But, as we have to tell many members, it must not be assumed that either BBC or ITV have all Bing's films. Unlike records, which can be bought and held in a library (and the BBC's is justly famed for its comprehensive qualities) parcels of films have to be negotiated for - and then are available only for a stated period. But we would

certainly agree with Ray that it would be good to see it again. But the remarks elsewhere in this issue about 'pop' music has a parallel with the films usually shewn - horror films, disaster films, Bond 007 films, all full of violence and nastiness. Decent family entertainment takes a back seat. But then, they do turn up now and then - Bing films, we mean!

GORDON WESLEY, 21 New Place Gardens, Upminster, Essex:

I think the Editorial and the article, HONOUR THY FATHER, were superb and sum up what we all feel about Gary's 'book' and its 'revelations'. Its a sad business indeed.

At a recent luncheon I found myself sitting next to Roy Plomley. In chatting about his show I asked him if he had kept tapes of all his 'castaways'. He said he hadn't as there would be far too many to store. Later I mentioned his interviewing Bing, and he admitted that WAS a tape that he kept! A fitting tribute, I thought.

> Editor: Indeed - and Gordon says what so many have written about the Editorial and HONOUR THY FATHER. It seems to have met with general approbation, including mail from the States.

MARGARET BILLINGTON, 54a High St., Cowes, Isle of Wight:

Pleased you enjoyed John Marshall's effort at the Waldorf. I was disappointed when you had to leave early as Steve (husband) and I had not had a chance to meet you. Every time we circulated near to you, you were deep in conversation.

Do we hold the record for being first there and last to go? We saw the 9 am people arrive when we were having breakfast! We decided that Bing was worth making a supreme effort for, so we made it a weekend at the Waldorf, arriving at 12.30pm on the Friday lunchtime and leaving Sunday morning 11 am. We went on to stay with friends in Surrey so as far as we were concerned, Bing's 80th birthday was well and truly celebrated!

> Editor: Lovely! Definitely the record must be Margaret's and Steve's....with the 9am Saturday arrivals well behind at second place.

STAN PHILLIPS, 45 Russell Mount, Branksome Wood Rd., Bournemouth:

I would like to add my name to the many who have congratulated John Marshall for the wonderful Bing celebrations at the Waldorf Hote. During this memorable occasion I expected to meet you and all the other contributors to the great BING magazine, but this wasn't to be as I found all my time was taken up meeting and enjoying the company of Bing fans, avid readers, like myself.

I did get to meet one great guy, Roy Chappell. What a smashing singer and entertainer he is. And we discovered we both had another idol, apart from Bing, namely the greatest speedway rider of all time - Jack Parker. A never-to-be-forgotten day.

> Editor: Well, as the last two letters show, many people are still showing their appreciation of John Marshall's efforts in making the Waldorf celebrations so enjoyable. Roy Chappell, in fact, was once a speedway rider at the famous Belle Vue, Manchester, track but an accident put paid to that career - happily singing is several degrees safer. And Roy is a smashing guy, as Stan says.
>
> PS. I don't suppose they're old enough to remember Roger and Buster Frogley ?

We must, perforce, return to the first letter above, NEIL ROBINSON's quest for I'VE GOT THE GIRL. We must or one of our lynx-eyed discographers certainly will! Checking for something else, we rediscovered something we really knew, i.e. that first record of Bing's was issued in this country as by THE CHARLESTON SERENADERS, with no mention at all of Don Clark & his Biltmore Hotel Orchestra! We relate this, not to discomfort Neil, but in case any others get the idea to advertise for Columbia 4310; if they do, remember it is by THE CHARLESTON SERENADERS.

These odd happenings were rife in the dance-band record industry all through; no doubt they were the result of some contractural skulduggery. It wasn't unusual for the same track to be issued for four or five times on different labels, and with a fictitious band quoted !

MRS. GWEN HARVEY, 33 Canterbury Rd., Farnborough, Hants

Some of my favourite 78s are getting a little worn, and I'm most upset that my most treasured record, Bing's rendering of Song from Desiree is now, I found, despite loving care, cracked right across and is no longer playable.....

Editor: Song from Desirée? Well, we're not ashamed to say, despite what some may think (!) that Gwen, to use a cricketing expression, has bowled us most comprehensively. Song from Desirée? Never heard of it! No doubt my abysmal ignorance will be quickly exposed - and I shall be the better for it!

ED. McCORD, 28 Lawnmount Cres., Lisburn, Co. Antrim, N. Ireland:

I write, sadly, to tell you of the death of Bill McDowell, a fellow-member who lived here in Lisburn. He was a great Bing fan; in fact, that is how I came to know him, going into the same record shops for Crosby records. The shop-owner one day said there was another chap who came in regularly looking for Bing records and reckoned we should meet.

Editor: We always receive such tidings with sadness. Bill McDowell had been a quiet but dedicated member for many years and we're grieved at his passing.

JOS. D'ADDARIO, 3200 Hartley Rd., Apt., 33, Jacksonville, FL. 32217, USA:

Again I am happy to send my annual subscription to BING. Be assured, it is read cover to cover and along with the views of all other members of the Circle. It is most welcome.

Although I may not correspond with the Circle, my interest in everything Bing is as avid as anyone's. I guess others express it so well in BING that members like myself can find nothing else to say. But we just keep nodding our approval as we read BING. It is like our Bible - a very necessary 'book' if we are to keep BC in perspective and in the forefront as well as to sort out everything throughout his long career. All my best to you and to all Circle members. Hope you have a nice summer !

Editor: Your appreciative letter most warmly received, Joseph - by all members too, I am certain. And yes indeed, we are enjoying a beautiful summer. This is not very usual here - we spend a lot of time moaning about the British weather - usually with adequate reason! On the other hand, we're forgetful! We do not get the natural catastrophies that beset most others countries like disastrous flooding, earthquakes, erupting volcanoes, arid droughts, hurricanes &c. We just like moaning!

CHAS. WILTSHIRE, 55 Gaston Way, Lavant, Chichester, S'x: Read with interest those songs Lionel Pairpoint listed but hasn't even a tatty copy of....I was just a youth in the 30's and a Bing fan, of course. So these songs are fresh in my mind. And as Bing appeared to sing every popular song that came along (whether he did or not!) I have the happy ability to sit back in my chair and more or less hear Bing singing them! Giving his own special touch to them, too. Those Lionel mentioned would be sheer bliss.

> Editor: A useful attribute Charles! We know what you mean, too. We often wish Bing had recorded BEGIN THE BEGUINE when it was first popular before the War, in that younger, vigorous, attacking style of his. In our reverie, we too can hear it!

JIM LOWE, 105 Renfrew Close, Strait Rd., East Ham, London E6 4PQ: I had some good chats (at the Waldorf) and laughs with some of the 'Geordies' whose names now evade me; but these were secondary against the conviviality and forbearance that abounded. There was a good turn-out from the North-East, most noticeable to me as I have a soft spot for the 'Geordies', as with indeed the 'Scouses'. They are born comedians with their marvellous accents. Let's hope dialects are never 'nationalised'! Why, even the Welsh-Cockney of our esteemed Editor has a certain charm, indeed to goodness!

> Editor: Hmmm...Jim touches on a subject that never fails to captivate me at our gatherings for, of course, we cover all accents! Yorkshire 'Tykes' included....mind you, when we get to the Scottish fraternity we often feel an interpreter would be useful.....but as Jim hints, there are letdowns - mainly to hear a Cockney editor from Welsh Wales, look, isn't it? Indeed it is, hah goom! What's Lancashire for "Gertcha!"?

Jim, by the way, address as shewn, would like to contact those having mags for disposal: BING Nos. 1, 7-10, 12, 14-16, 19-25, 27-29, 31 and 46. BING PICTORIALS Nos. 1 and beyond...CROSBY COLLECTORS, BINGANGS, CROSBY POSTS Will buy or have for exchange 10" LPs, and EP and some 7" singles, plus 12" LPs - all negotiable. (Phone 01-474-8436)

MRS. G. McLAREN, 95 Southpilmuir Rd., Clackmannan, Clackmannanshire, Scotland has her late husband's large Crosby collection for disposal, including 78s, 45s, tapes, LPs - Corals, Ace of Hearts, RCA, Columbia, MCA, Decca Etc., Japanese and US issues. All in A1 condition - many deletions and rarities. SAE for lists to the lady named. (I'm glad we don't have too many members in Clackmannanshire - imagine the work addressing the envelopes! But I hope you have no trouble for this seems a remarkable avenue to acquire some good material - like Geoff. Nicholson's elsewhere.

To the many who have asked why AUF WIEDERSEHEN, MY DEAR/LOVABLE/ EVERY TIME MY HEART BEATS, FOR YOU, &c. are not to be found in BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD: They are not included because they were never <u>commercially</u> recorded, i.e. they never came out on Decca, Brunswick, HMV, Columbia, CBS and so on. They were recorded ONLY for the Mack Sennett soundtracks. Now that they are on a BIOGRAPH album they present a knotty problem for discographers! Is that, forsooth, a "commercial" recording now?

TRADING POST

In this feature members may advertise their wants and disposals of Crosbyana..... records, tapes, books, pictures, memorabilia, &c. There is no charge for this facility but please keep insertions to within six lines. If lengthy lists are involved, invite an SAE from people interested. Non-Crosby items incur a nominal £1 charge for entry.

ITEMS ARE PRINTED IN GOOD FAITH BUT IT IS UP TO MEMBERS TO SATISFY THEMSELVES THEY ARE MAKING A SATISFACTORY DEAL.

JOHN RAINE, 109 Sandown Crescent, Sandiway, Northwich, Ches. CW8 2QN has 47 Bing 78s for disposal, with 50% of proceeds to ICC funds. Offers invited.

MRS. AUDREY COOPER, 30 Broadway East, Carlton, Nottingham, NG4 1AG wants SONGS OF THE ISLANDS album, please. (Audrey is sadly aware this was recently offered in Woolworths at a bargain price but it seems to have missed her area).

WANTED: Record or taping of BING CROSBY SINGS VICTOR HERBERT SONGS - MERVYN THOMAS, 52 Gratwicke Rd., Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 4BH

RON MILLS, 18 Percival Rd., Feltham, Midd'x, TW13 4LF does quite a bit of Bing-singing around and is anxious to obtain sheet-music of Crosby songs - if anyone can kindly help.

BARRY SANDERCOCK, 10 Captain Cook Close, Chalfont St. Giles, Bucks has BING'S HOLLYWOOD Nos. 13 and 14 for sale (Brunswick of course) in excellent condition. Offers invited; will sell separately if necessary.

Happily, BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD, is still available to UK members at the old price of £3.50 post paid, though a reprint at a higher price is looming up. For the benefit of new members, this is a hardback volume which lists ALL Bing's recordings, first in date order from 1926 to 1977, then secondly in Alphabetical form for reference, and was compiled by John Bassett and Bert Bishop. By itself it forms a complete record of popular song virtually this century. Accompanists and fellow-duettists &c. are included and it thus also affords endless interesting browsing. For overseas members adjustment has to be made for postage: European £4.00, US/Canadian £4.00 surface mail, £6.00 air-mail. It is available ONLY from:

JOHN JOYCE (Bookbinders)
Saltmeadows Rd.,
GATESHEAD, Tyne & Wear,
NE8 3AH

All remittances MUST be in sterling and and payable to "JOHN JOYCE, ICC ACCOUNT"

Australian members should use the US price.

Other ICC publications which remain available FROM THE SECRETARY (Reg Bristo) are as follows:

THE LP-OGRAPHY OF BING CROSBY, listing more than 1000 albums featuring Bing; this is now in need of updating, for it takes us only to about 1977. Unlike a discography, which can begin and end with the first and last recordings, the LPography is constantly being added to - which is good. Price £2.00 post paid.

PHILCO RADIO TIMES: full details with prolific notes of Bing's radio programmes for Philco, by LIONEL PAIRPOINT. £2.50 p/paid

THE ABC OF BING (an analysis in detail of varying 'takes' of Crosby records by COLIN PUGH, £2.50 post paid.

THE BING CROSBY MINI-DISCOGRAPHY - this has been supplanted, of course by BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD, see above, but is still useful for those who wish to mark off or otherwise notate which records they have, rather than disfigure the hardback volume. £1.50 post paid.

ALAN CHADWICK, 3 Mortimer Close Hartley Wintney, Nr. Basingstoke Hants, RG27 8EL has the following Bing films for sale or exchange for LP wants. But open to other offers:

ROAD TO MOROCCO Standard 8 sound 4 reels, good condition.

BLUE SKIES Standard 8 sound, black/white only, good condition 5 reels.

BING - HOLLYWOOD STARS Super 8 sound, unused.

JOHN JOYCE (BUTCHERS) 5, Shelley Rd., Short Heath, Willenhall, West Mids. WV12 5HZ: I urgently need USA TV specials on video. Would swap for LPs - have Australian GOING HOLLYWOOD Vols 1,2,3,4,5,6, and 17; all Spokanes, dozens on 45rpm and English LPs. (Its not clear whether John wants USA TV specials on USA system, or English sytem.)

MRS. RENEE CHESTER, 48 Milton Rd Hanwell, London, W7 1LE has 200 very neat Bing (face) lapel badges for sale, 50p each; also she has most of Bing's films on video - only TOP O' THE MORNING and HERE IS MY HEART required to complete. and is willing to copy: 63 video tapes of Bing, all of 3-hours duration.

JOHN JOYCE, 21 Birchfield Gardens, Low Fell, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE9 7TJ - phone 0632 - 878761 has a stock of an album we can say without hesitation, every Bing admirer would want. Send SAE or phone - but limited stock means first come first supplied, 8 titles per side which you have almost certainly never heard!

THOS. MOONEY, 63 Glenhill Rd., Finglas Rd., Dublin 11, Ireland is looking for LE BING - SONG HITS OF PARIS. (And a few others are too, I suspect! - Editor).

BING ties, with the 'silhouette' motif in navy OR maroon, are available at £2.80 post paid from: THE BADGE CENTRE, 45 Ropergate, Pontefract, West Yorks. They look smart with most suits!

ARNOLD BAKER, 48 Groomsport Rd., Bangor, Co. Down, N. Ireland offers a wide selection of cassettes/reel to reel, of radio programmes, incl. Australian and rare Bing items on good quality C120s or as required. Send medium sized SAE for catalogue.

ICC Car-stickers in blue and gold are available from BARRY THECKSTON, 13 Cunliffe Av., Ramsbottom, Lancs: 60p each or two for £1. Just send remittance with SAE. (3" diameter).

JOHN JOYCE (see Gateshead address above) is always interested in Bing records, books and other memorabilia; and the same request is made by R.S.(Bob) Jones, of 39 Gladstone St., Hebburn, Tyne & Wear, NE31 2XD.

JACK SOUTHER 2011-44th Avenue, San Francisco, Ca. 94116 is always interested in UK contacts for Bing and other vintage material, records &c., sheet music, books. Useful US contact for members.

Members are earnestly requested not to overlook the "X" subscription reminder if it appears at the front of this issue. Overlooking could mean you may be left out of the next issue printing estimate! Co-operation warmly appreciated.

BING ALBUMS FOR THAT DESERT ISLE

The idea, whimsical (in thought), but dire (in the event) of being marooned on a desert island, a la popular and long-running Roy Plomley radio programme, continues to inspire members, sometimes however with more whimsy than selection! FRANK CHALLENGER, of 17 Steam Mill Lane, Ripley, Derbys. wonders whether or not electricity would be avaibabe on such an isle - or would it be a wind-up job? Perhaps we could plug into an electric eel? He ended by saying he would rather take eight cassettes - easier to handle and look after....C120's he meant! However, amusing - but out of order, even though we've expanded Roy Plomley's desire for eight discs to eight ALBUMS.

Another note was struck by LES BRICE, 40 Crown Rd., Clacton-on-Sea, Essex (but late of Romford) who wrote: "Perhaps an easier choice could be the eight albums one WOULDN'T take...I don't know if I could actually pick eight albums in this category but one that I'd definitely leave behind would be BING ON THE HAPPY SIDE - tho' I'm sure it is likely some members would regard it as a treasure."

Hmmm...sounds like high treason! But no - I can think of a couple of albums I wouldn't be grieved to leave behind - but more of that later. Here is another selection:

LES STREET, 8 Wyfan Place, Mynachdy, Cardiff: (1) BING'S HOLLYWOOD No. 1 - the sheer beauty and power of Bing's voice on this album would always keep me from feeling depressed at my predicament. (2) BING SINGS SONGS OF THE ISLANDS: I'd play this while making myself as comfortable as Robinson Crusoe and imagine my isle was in the South Seas. Another beautiful album. (3) RHYTHM ON THE RANGE - another type of song that Bing sang as no one else; this would enable me to escape from the island to the lone prairie with songs like BOOTS & SADDLE and SILVER ON THE SAGE. (4) DAYDREAMING - this I'd play at nights, especially if I was finding it difficult to sleep - very restful. (5) CROSBY CLASSICS (Hallmark) - another slice of the young Bing at his peak. Never feel abandoned with this around. (6) MERRY CHRISTMAS: if I was to be on the island for any length of time, Christmas would have to be completed with this. (7) THE GOLDEN AGE OF AMERICAN RADIO (UA) This would take me back again to those great days, such greats as the Mills Bros., Connee Boswell, Bob Hope, Jimmy Durante and others with Bing. (8) THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT: a time for the meditation which would be inevitable in my loneliness, ameliorated by these Bing records, of course.

PHIL MORGAN, 5 Sanderson Rd., Jesmond, Newcastle-on-Tyne: (1) THE BING CROSBY STORY Vol 1 (The Early Jazz Years) Record 2 - this contains marvellous examples of the early Bing, in particular both versions of ST. LOUIS BLUES and CABIN IN THE COTTON, which gets better every time I hear it. (2) BING'S GREAT FILM SONGS (World Records SM293) This an absolute 'must' for it contains my favourite Bing recording, DOWN BY THE RIVER - an LP aptly titled. (3) BING SINGS THE GREAT SONGS - another aptly titled collection - a magnificent album. (7) SEASONS - One of Bing's last recording sessions and for me easily the best of the

later Bing. Both the title song and YESTERDAY, WHEN I WAS YOUNG, bring all kinds of memories flooding back.

(8) THE FINAL CHAPTER (BBC) - Bing's very last recorded performance, truly great, and ending with ONCE IN A WHILE, with the sad and prophetic verse. He will never be forgotten. So, my choice; covering all moods I think but mind you, next week I could just as easily pick another eight!

JOHN BIGNELL, 21 St. Andrews Aven., Wembley, Midd'x goes about it with characteristic diligence! His selection:

(1) WRAP YOUR TROUBLES IN DREAMS: This was my first Crosby LP and will always remain a firm favourite. It includes some unforgettable early Bing with IT MUST BE TRUE, ONE MORE TIME, JUST ONE MORE CHANCE and the title song itself, so redolent of Bing's own philosophy and a much better theme song than BLUE OF THE NIGHT, surely? The early Bing (1927-31) is captured brilliantly on this album.

(2) BING 1 (From BING'S HOLLYWOOD 1-15): It seems a crime to separate this LP from its 14 companions but it gives me wonderful memories of some of Bing's finest film songs. The variation of mood between LOVE IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER, DOWN BY THE RIVER, I WISH I WERE ALADDIN and WITH EVERY BREATH I TAKE, plus the fact that all the songs were recorded when Bing's voice was, arguably, at its very peak of perfection, make this essential for my list.

(3) TWILIGHT ON THE TRAIL: I've always been particularly fond of Bing renditions of the "cowboy" ballads and this album again gives full value with its representative selection of western songs. THE SINGING HILLS, A ROUND-UP LULLABY, and indeed the beautiful title song itself contrasting superbly with BE HONEST WITH ME, RIDERS IN THE SKY and CLEMENTINE.

(4) DRIFTING & DREAMING: This isle, presumably in the Pacific, would need an album of Hawaiian flavour. From several excellent collections available I've chosen this one, which has the lovely 1940 version of BLUE OF THE NIGHT, WHEN YOU'RE A LONG, LONG WAY FROM HOME, MY ISLE OF GOLDEN DREAMS (which Bing himself enjoyed so much recording) and several other delightfully dreamy songs.

(5) BING WITH A BEAT: Bing the Jazz Singer is a theme very close to my heart and I had very reluctantly to discard several splendid album with this theme in favour of the 1957 collaboration with Bob Scobey's Frisco Jazz Band. At this point in time it is impossible to predict what future generations into the next century will label as 'definitive Bing', but if they choose this impeccable session I wouldn't quarrel with their selection.

(6) HOLIDAY IN EUROPE: The 1960's have oft been cited as Bing's least productive and least distinguished decade which may have more than an element of substance, but the decade began with a superb and in my opinion under-rated album, Backed by some of the most splendid accompaniment he ever enjoyed Bing is at his mature best from the bright opening number APRIL IN PORTUGAL through such classics as C'EST SI BON, DOMENICA to the so-difficult to sing MELANCHOLIE, which last number even Bing had some difficulty with in rehearsal before coming up with his faultless performance.

FEELS GOOD, FEELS RIGHT: Most of us, I imagine, could not possibly choose a representative selection of Bing LPS without including one from the now legendary 'final chapter' of his illustrious singing career. No writer of fiction would have dared invent a character who ended his professional career in such a blaze of glory. But Bing, of course, defied such tradition and gave us a legacy which

included such memorable albums as BING AND BASIE, A SOUTHERN MEMOIR, THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT and many more. But I give pride of place to the Decca album made in July/August 1976 which includes Bing's own 'potted history' of his career with the now immortal THERE'S NOTHING THAT I HAVEN'T SUNG ABOUT.

So, having one more album to select I had, at this stage, to pause and consider what I've left out and how I was going to bring this particular exercise to a close? It sounded easy at the outset but I have to make a final choice with the knowledge that I can't take so many treasured albums with me. Looking thro' my seven I see there is nothing of the Rhythm Boys, nothing of the early jazz period, no Mills Brothers, no Andrews Sisters (:) no Bob Hope and, horror of horrors, no CONNEE BOSWELL!

I can't possibly let that last omission stand, and consequently, in the absence of a 12-inch LP of Bing and Connee on the commercial market, I would select as my No. 8 the long-deleted 10-inch Decca LP, BING AND CONNEE which remains one of the most sought after items for collectors - in the same category as HIGH TOR and LE BING, all much desired but quite senselessly unavailable.

Cor! Follow that: Well, I said I would so here goes with your Editor's eight for that mythical island:

Consistently over the years I've been Secretary/Editor I have noted that invariably a member's favourite period is that when they first 'discovered' Bing. I mean all those who came under the spell in any decade except the 30's has its adherents - yet again, almost universally, even those eventually come to appreciate the voice of Bing when he was young - or younger. But to those who remember Bing's first, tremendous impact, those halcyon days must be paramount - they are the lucky ones! An impact that made the impact of Elvis Presley, the Beatles, or even Barry Mannilow seem puny. And with the very important difference that Bing instantly appealed to all ages - really all ages. Not just 'with-it' kids or teenagers but those who were much older. Those who classified 'crooners' as tripe ! And mention of crooners reminds me that that label, applied to Bing, especially in those early days, was the most profound misnomer, mis-classification. His strong, vibrant, powerful voice, with its rich timbre never did come into that category.

But, Bing came through the dance-band 'vocal refrain' avenue when all such singers were so classified. No doubt some undiscerning critic or reviewer applied the label - and it stuck, idiotically wrong though it was.

So, assuredly, my choice has to reflect that impact:

(1) BING'S HOLLYWOOD: Bing 1 - though truth to tell, any of this series, or at least, from the first six, would fulfil the purpose; yet songs like JUNE IN JANUARY, IT EASY TO REMEMBER, SOON, SWANEE RIVER, DOWN BY THE RIVER, WITH EVERY BREATH I TAKE - no, I couldn't be without these.

(2) Even more so fitting my opening remarks must be WHERE THE BLUE OF THE

NIGHT MEETS THE GOLD OF THE DAY - the Biograph album which, miraculously and so late, gave us the songs from the historic Mack Sennett shorts. Earlier, of course, than the BING'S HOLLYWOOD series, songs such as AUF WIEDERSEHEN, MY DEAR, EVERY TIME MY HEART BEATS, FOR YOU, DREAM HOUSE, LOVABLE recapture not only Bing, but those exciting days when sound films were new and records were only then getting worldwide sales; indeed, radio wasn't all that old! What an age it was....for years I treasured those old songs on tatty reel-to-reel tapes and then lo! and behold, we had this album - which of course is nothing like the album of the same title on MFP.

(3) and (4) follows the same tack, for good or ill! BING IN HOLLYWOOD 1930-34: again that powerful, appealing, voice singing in a way we'd never heard before. Hearing all the words, noting the attractive phrasing, loving the asides or ad libs, or 'bending' of the song that Bing, all through, was apt to indulge in. Just look at the songs on this double-set - and ask how it can be left out?

(5) and (6) Yes, another two-album choice: Like most members, I love Bing and the 'cowboy' songs; he sings them in a style which makes today's Country & Western 'experts' sound like thin-voiced amateurs. TWILIGHT ON THE TRAIL - hm..beautiful; and what of HOME ON THE RANGE...how can THAT be omitted? More up-to-date, BING SINGS THE GREAT COUNTRY HITS, RHYTHM ON THE RANGE - all these would fit the bill but I have to plump for the 'Western' set that has it all! HOW THE WEST WAS WON. Lovely, unusual songs, Bing in so many moods - WHEN I GO OUT TO PROSPECT, HANG ME, O HANG ME, STREETS OF LAREDO, GREEN GROW THE LILACS, WON'T YOU COME TO THE BOWER...plus, Bing using his dialectic skills in narrating the Western story. This set must come with me to cover the Western scene....and this selection shows that I am not completely rooted in the distant past!

(7) IN A LITTLE SPANISH TOWN: I'm extremely fond of Latin-American music, and while this isn't in the true indigenous style of that lovely South American folklore, Bing is in excellent voice with such fine songs as HASTA MANANA, VAYA CON DIOS, LET ME LOVE YOU TONIGHT, SIBONEY, YOU BELONG TO MY HEART, FLORES NEGAS and the gay ALLA EN RANCHO GRANDE.

(8) THAT TRAVELLIN' TWO-BEAT: Yes, lively, melodious, witty, punchy. Traditional songs in an entirely new dressing - VIENNA WOODS, ROAMIN' IN THE GLOAMIN', POOR PEOPLE OF PARIS, I GET IDEAS, that lovely 'farewell' song, CIAO, CIAO, BAMBINA. Makes a good singalong, too.

It was tough; I had to omit the CBS Embassy collections, the Christmas albums, hymns, the Hawaiian beauties....but I do have the sure knowledge that I could never, never, tire of the eight I have selected.

Regarding the suggestion of LES BRICE: two albums I wouldn't pine for are EL SENOR BING (or BING GOES LATIN). Here, Billy May amply illustrated he has no conception of the way Latin-American music should be treated. Staccato, brassy, lacking in melody....all completely opposite to what it should be. Secondly in that category, BING SINGS WHILE BREGMAN SWINGS. Dreadful! If Bregman wanted to 'swing' why did he pick such (normally) lovely melodies as SEPTEMBER IN THE RAIN, 'DEED I DO, THE BLUE ROOM, CHEEK TO CHEEK &c? To add to this really inept selection he added insult to injury by trying to blast Bing off the tracks with unfeeling, blaring, brassy, arrangements. There were plenty of swing tunes he - or to be fair, perhaps it was Bing - could have chosen - a la Bob Scobey, for instance.

No doubt at this stage it behoves me to state that contributor's views and opinions are not necessarily those of the Editor - or vice versa! Plenty of room for disagreement - which is healthy - and no doubt many look upon these two albums as among their favourites. Nothing wrong with the singing - Bing's fine voice is always eminently listenable - but even here, I feel, he was forced into a style which wasn't really his by these unfeeling arrangements. Those who 'complain' about John Scott Trotter's work might care to give a special ear to Billy May and Buddy Bregman, forsooth!

> JOHN BIGNELL's suggestion that WRAP YOUR TROUBLES IN DREAMS would have made a better theme song for Bing than BLUE OF THE NIGHT is interesting. Its hard to see, as far as the lyric is concerned, why this song was, in fact, chosen. The melody is great - but the words do not seem in any way apt. Totally incomprehensible is Bing's remark in his musical autobiography that JUST AN ECHO IN THE VALLEY was considered as a theme song. I've always felt - with respect to John - that PLEASE would have been ideal -- tho' I hasten to add that even here only the first three lines would be apposite! So, what ideas have members concerning other songs Bing might have used instead of BLUE OF THE NIGHT, even though now the song is quite inseparable from him? It would, naturally, have to have been an <u>early</u> song to have been adopted around 1931. LEARN TO CROON must be debarred even if it would have suited some with no 'ears'!

Its not easy; the tune has to be memorable and the lyric not too inappropriate, which is what led me to choose PLEASE - perhaps the first of Bing's really big songs. Pity Harry Barris, with Bing's help (as in BLUE OF THE NIGHT) didn't write a special song for Bing with melody and lyric eminently suitable! If you have any thoughts on the subject we'll be glad to hear - but a tune later than 1931 shouldn't be considered. The lyric of WRAP YOUR TROUBLES is certainly suitable...

"MY LIFE WITH BING": KATHRYN CROSBY : by BARRY HOLLOWDAY (Wick, Littlehampton)

Having read and reflected on what Kathryn has written in a very readable and humourous style, it seems to ring fairly true, I feel. She must have had a helluva time with dear old Bing but she knew too what she was doing after those years of seemingly tempestuous courtship. And it might be said she didn't come out of it too badly! The pictures in the book are marvellous, being mainly from the Crosby private archives and are almost worth the price of the book in themselves; and as it costs £18.75p that may be a bold view.

Three things about the book surprised me: firstly the nice picture of Bing on the dust jacket - one of his own favourites, we're told - is, I am almost certain, reproduced in reverse. Secondly, the book is condensed from a manuscript originally about three times as long, thus I find the text tends to seem disjointed in places. Thirdly, my greatest surprise was to find the book goes only as far as 1965. Thus, in truth, it might be called HALF MY LIFE WITH

BING. Could this be a crafty ploy by Kathryn to come up with another volume covering the last 12 years should the first prove successful?

Editor: A fraction only, of course, of Bing's 74 years. There have been small references in the press, tho' a larger one appeared in at least one paper. This was to the effect that Princess Caroline, daughter of Princess Grace (Kelly) had made an impassioned, personal, appeal to Mrs. C. to delete the references to her late mother. The request was turned down. Seems Caroline then pleaded with her father, Prince Rainier to contact the publishers but, according to the report, his reply was that he "wished to treat the book with utter contempt".

ANSWERS TO CROSBY QUIZ ON PAGE 26 (turn page up!)

1. FROM THE TOP OF YOUR HEAD: Bing sings: "You have so many thrillables, say Bing's fresh out of syllables..." A neat, inventive, rhyme!
2. TAKES TWO TO MAKE A BARGAIN: Bing sings: "What do I sing 'Love in Bloom' for?....."
3. TWO FOR TONIGHT.
4. The title song, the above two, and I WISH I WERE ALADDIN/WITHOUT A WORD OF WARNING.
5. Dorsey Brothers. 6. Jacqueline Fontaine, who played a cabaret singer.
7. (a) Dorothy Lamour (b) Rhonda Fleming (c) Jane Wyman.
8. (1) Wesley Ruggles directed Bing in COLLEGE HUMOR and SING YOU SINNERS; he was also an original Keystone Cop (2) Both were discarded titles for the first 'Road' film, e.g. Singapore. (3) James Van Heusen, wanted to change real name (Edward Chester Babcock); friend looked out of the window and saw ad. for Van Heusen Collars - they didn't then make the full shirt. ITS THE DREAMER IN ME was the first of his songs recorded by Bing.
9. Tons of 'em: the girls - AMAPOLA, GIGI, KATRINA, DIXIE, DOLORES, EILEEN, places like CUBA, CHICAGO, BAIA.., AVALON, DARDANELLA; others like PLEASE, THANKS, CABARET, LOVABLE, IMAGINATION.....many others like JOOBALAI, CHILDREN, MILADY, MOONBURN, FRENESI, AGAIN, - check for yourselves!

Only remains to say that the comfortable, easy ones were by your Editor; the devilish ones, e.g. Nos. 7 and 8, all parts, were by the tormenting LIONEL FAIRPOINT !

PS. I thought Rhonda Fleming's real name was as attractive as the one she adopted. And what about Frances Gumm ?

Its quite a thought - and we hope its occurring to independent companies - that the 50-year copyright restriction on recordings is rapidly expiring and that will cover what so many believe to be Bing's finest period - recordings up to 1934! At least, that's our belief - and it is backed up by the fact that dance-band recordings (highly prized by many) are being freely issued now - recordings hitherto only available on Decca, HMV, CBS and all the big 'giants' are available by 'small' companies like Saville, President, Joy, Living Era &c. The field for Crosby reissues is boundless. Let's keep our fingers crossed !

The bank manager slyly says to me: "You'd think after all these years your members would know your NAME!" He was referring to the large number of members who make out cheques/PO's to Reg B R I S T O W, or B R I S T O E, or B R I S T O W E ! It is, of course, quite simply: B R I S T O. He's tolerant but we may as well have it right, look you! Indeed, one persists in BIRSTO!

And then I wanted to talk about another astonishing facet of Bing's enormous talents - blast, too late. We're running out of space and I could go on for another dozen or so pages. That's Crosbyana.....with you again in December! December? Ye Gods..... Christmas already....